ODD NEIGHBOURS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"LORD LYNN'S WIFE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

HAVE you been in Egypt, reader? Of course you have. In this age of progress we have all "done" the Pyramids, sauntered up the Nile, and seen the stock sights of Alexandria. Of these, perhaps, the most striking is the advent of the Outward Mail—the rush of the India-bound passengers from the steamer to the quay.

What a heterogeneous mass of bawling, struggling humanity! Turbaned Baboos, oily and nose-jewelled; elbowing, unprotected females with the bluest of blue "uglies," and the greenest of green veils; sun-dried

old Indians; jostling rosy lads in the early bloom of griffinhood, young bears with all their sorrows to come; soldiers, civilians, Ayahs, missionaries, Europeans and Asiatics, pouring pell-mell over the gangway, are borne off in a whirlwind of dust, dragomans, and red-saddled donkeys, hotelwards.

A motley throng, yet fellow travellers for the time. But, to adapt an old proverb, "locomotion often makes us acquainted with odd neighbours." "Odd Neighbours," however, are by no means confined to social life. They exist also in the literary world. As Hindoos and English, Parsees and Levantines, Yankee speculators and Moorish pilgrims, white, black, and brown, assembled from the four quarters of the earth to take their passage in the same steam-ship—so the "Odd Neighbours" whom I have now to introduce to you, came from many distant lands to meet originally in the columns of "All the Year Round." Some are from Poland, some

from Italy, not a few have crossed the Atlantic from American shores, others are from Russia, from France, from Denmark, or from far countries beyond the sea. Each of these has something to tell, and I hope all may prove pleasant acquaintances, and that the stories and adventures they have to relate may interest and amuse.

LONDON, MARCH, 1865.

ODD NEIGHBOURS.

FOR LIFE OR DEATH.

"Senor Inglese, a young lady renders a visit to your grace," said fat Juan the waiter, throwing the door wide for the visitor's admission. I was sitting in the window of my little room on the third floor of the Fonda de l'Alameda, looking down upon the darkling promenade where the lighted cigar-tips were beginning to twinkle among the fountains and marble statues, and where the beaux and belles of Malaga, with fan and rustling mantilla, and jingling spurs, were passing and repassing in endless groups, full of mirth and gossip. As for myself, I was heartily tired. We had had a long day's work in getting the cargo on board, and I was fairly worn out with the toil of encouraging the lazy

stevedores and disputing with the harpies of the Spanish custom-house. But the good ship Tudor, of Bristol, to which I belonged, in the capacity of first mate, had to be freighted as speedily as possible for the homeward voyage, and as Captain Meiklejohn was getting frail and old, most of the responsibility devolved upon myself. Nor did I grudge it, the rather that Price and Thompson, our owners, had as good as promised that when the Tudor next sailed away out of the sight of the tower of St. Mary Redcliffe, Henry West should command her, vice Meiklejohn, retired on a pension. And then—

But as my thoughts were busy with the day-dreams which fancy had conjured up with reference to what I should be able to do with the increased salary and higher position of captain, day-dreams in which the sweet little face and soft brown eyes of Alice Croft were inextricably mixed up with visions of a snug English home at Clifton, with happy children at play in its garden, and a loving welcome back for the husband and father when he should return from sea, Juan the waiter flung the door open exactly as I have described. And Alice Croft herself, with her poor little

pretty face very white and tear-stained came hastily in, while in the passage without I caught a glimpse of the wrinkled ugliness of old Seraphina, the old crone who was the Crofts' only servant.

"Alice darling! You here? What is the matter?" said I, springing from my chair; and in a moment the poor little lonely English girl was weeping on my shoulder. It was not for some moments that I could succeed in calming her agitation sufficiently to draw from her a coherent account of the misfortune that had occurred, though I easily guessed that no trifling cause would have induced a girl so modest and strictly brought up as my dear Alice to enter the crowded and bustling Spanish hotel for the purpose of visiting a bachelor inmate of the Fonda. But at first Alice could say no more, through her sobs, than the words, "My father, my dear father!" and these led me vaguely to conclude that some accident had happened to old Mr. Croft, though of what nature I could not guess.

Old Mr. Croft was one of the few English, excepting the invalids whom the warm winter

climate had at that time begun to attract, resident in Malaga. He was a widower, and Alice was his only child, and about nineteen years of age. Her father had married late in life, and on this account, perhaps, and for the sake of the wife, to whom he had been tenderly attached, and who had died when Alice was still very young, he was unusually wrapped up in his daughter, of whom he was excessively proud and fond. He was, indeed, of rather a proud and reserved nature, and disposed at times to speak and think with bitterness of a world by which he considered himself to have been unjustly used. His past history I never thoroughly knew, for he was not over communicative, but he had been very well educated, and I often fancied from his manners and appearance that he had once occupied a much higher social position than that which he filled when I knew him. As it was, he was poor, and lived by the exercise of his talents as an artist. I believe he had considerable merits as a painter, but from constitutional shyness, or some feeling of, perhaps, morbid sensitiveness, he did not carry his powers to the best market. He was an

excellent draughtsman, and had a fertile fancy and a correct taste, and he got his living partly as a drawing-master, partly by executing designs for Perez Brothers, the richest manufacturers in Malaga.

The Tudor paid periodical visits to the port of Malaga, and during one of these I had accidentally formed the acquaintance of Mr Croft, for whom I willingly undertook to execute some trifling commission in England. I suppose we were mutually pleased with each other, for I percieved at once that he was a very superior man, and that in spite of the cynical tone that he sometimes affected, he was really of a generous and kindly disposition, a little warped by the world's rough usage. On his part, he showed his regard for me by inviting me to his house, a compliment which he paid to but few of our wandering countrymen. I saw Alice, and soon learned to love her, and after a while I was overjoyed to find that her innocent heart was given to me. But old Mr. Croft, who had been accustomed to think of his daughter as a child, set his face against our marriage, and behaved, as I thought, very cruelly in the

matter. It would have been a hard thing for him, I am sure, to part with Alice to any one, a not uncommon case of half-unconscious parental selfishness. But, to do him justice, I am sure he thought that he was merely showing a prudent forethought for his child's interests in forbidding her to marry. He not unreasonably objected that my profession was hazardous, and my income small, and that though youth was apt to be sanguine, experience must be cautious. There was no hurry. Alice was very young, and I was young too, for that matter. Probably we should both of us see cause to change our minds, but if not, some years hence, &c., &c.

Though I chafed against the sentence, and Alice grieved at her father's decision, she was a good, obedient girl, and submitted to her parent's will. She would never marry any one else, she said, but she would not marry me in spite of her father's prohibition, never, never, though her heart should break for the loss of me. And with this qualified engagement and troth-plight I was forced to be content, though I looked eagerly forward to promotion, hoping that as captain of the

Tudor I might appear to the old artist as a more eligible son-in-law. And now here was Alice suddenly appearing in my room at the hotel, and sobbing piteously as she tried to tell me what had happened.

At last I learned the truth; Mr. Croft had the habit of taking a morning walk outside the landward gate of the city, and in the direction of the mountains. He was an early riser, and had an artist's fondness for the face of nature when the earth seems to awaken, fresh and young, at the first kiss of the sunshine. He was used, then, to stroll out beyond the walls as soon as the gates were opened for the ingress of the peasants coming to the market, and many of his best sketches were made in these rambles. In one of these strolls, that very morning, Mr. Croft had by ill-luck stumbled into an ambush of the banditti, from whom the wild sierras neighbouring on Malaga are seldom free. These robbers, under a noted chief named Moreno, had of late been very audacious and troublesome, and it was conjectured that a party of the gang, lying in wait for the chance of kidnapping some wealthy townsman or

landed proprietor, had pounced on Mr. Croft for lack of loftier game.

It is probable that the bandits may at first have been deceived as to the value of their captive. An Englishman is always considered a wealthy man in virtue of his nationality, and, besides, the sight of broadcloth produces on Spaniards nearly the same talismanic effect that the Neapolitan lazzaroni experience when confronted by a "vestito di panno," whose rank is inferred from the material of his coat. But at any rate they had made a hasty retreat to their fastness in the hills, bearing their captive with them. And when Alice, after waiting for her father's return, first in surprise, then in uneasiness, and lastly in alarm, went out to seek him, and came home baffled and tired, deep in the afternoon—old Seraphina gave her a letter, hastily pencilled on a scrap of folded paper, which an unknown peasant woman had left at the house.

The letter was from Mr. Croft. It ran thus:

"My dearest, dear Alice,—To give you pain is worse than pain to me, but the truth must

be told. I am a prisoner in the hands of Moreno, at a place high up in the sierra. I write this at a halting-place, and I am told we shall instantly resume our journey, whither I do not know. I am in the hands of desperate men, who sell blood, or shed it, for money. They demand a ransom from me. As I have succeeded in convincing them that I am poor, they have fixed my price at five thousand reals. But unless this money is paid by noon on Wednesday, the chief assures me that—but why torture you, my child, by repeating a barbarian's threats?—at any rate, you will no longer have a father. I must die, Alice, dear, for well I know that to raise even that small sum is impossible. And we have no friends in Malaga. Perez Brothers might perhaps be induced to—but no. My employers would refuse. It is possible, however, that the British consul might take up the case. At any rate, Alice, love, I am sure he will assist you in getting home to England, and it is my earnest wish that you should leave Spain as soon as you can, and seek out those relatives of your mother whose names you have heard me mention, and who will not

deny you shelter and protection in your great need. The robbers whose prisoner I am bid me say that on Wednesday, at noon, some of the gang will await the payment of my ransom at the oratory near the village of Santa Maria del Gloria, at the foot of the mountains that border the road to Antequera and Madrid. There the money can be paid in the presence of the village padre, who is known to the band, and Moreno has sworn on the crucifix to give me up unharmed, and not to molest the messenger. But I have little hope, though I know you will try to obtain the money, dearest child. Farewell, dear Alice, God bless you, and Harry West too. I feel I was harsh with respect to—but you have my consent now. Bless—"

Here the paper had been torn, probably by the rough hands of the messenger to whom it was entrusted, and some lines of writing were lost. However, the signature, "Philip Croft," still remained legible, and beside it was a rude representation of a cross, traced apparently with the point of a charred stick, while below it was written the word "Moreno,"

in Mr. Croft's handwriting. No doubt the robber captain had chosen to add his countersign to the document, the language of which he was unable to interpret.

"How shall we save him!" were the words that broke from the lips of both. I had to learn, however, that Alice had not sought me in the first instance. As soon as she received the pencilled lines, and had rallied from the effects of the first stunning shock, she had been nerved to exertion by the thought of her dear father's danger, and she had gone from place to place, accompanied by old Seraphina. But in vain. The most obvious course to pursue, since there were but a very few dollars in Alice's slender purse, was to sell the modest furniture of the little household, but a short interview with a broker proved the uselessness of this step. Those humble Lares and Penates would not bring a fourth of the necessary sum, and the landlord, too, had claims for the rent of the current half year. The artist's forebodings with respect to the liberality of Perez Brothers were fully realised. Alice begged and prayed, but the firm refused, blandly, but pitilessly,

to make any advance, much less one of five thousand reals. Mr. Croft, they said, was a very good draughtsman, but business was business, and there was no obligation on either side. They very politely bowed the weeping girl out of their counting-house. At the British Consulate, Alice met with no better success. By ill luck the consul was absent. He would return in three or four days, but for the moment there was no help to be looked for in that quarter. Alice had a few cherished ornaments that had belonged to her mother. These she had sold, but, alas! they had produced but eight or nine hundred reals. And though old Seraphina, who took all the saints to witness that her master was a good man, and her young mistress was an angel, heretics or not, came with tears running down her wrinkled face, and offered her contribution in the shape of the gold cross she wore on holidays, and some twenty pillar-dollars saved out of her wages, nearly four thousand reals remained to be provided for within a brief delay.

What was to be done? I had not ten pounds in my possession, and neither I nor

the Crofts had any credit with the bankers or merchants of Malaga. Captain Meiklejohn, as I knew, had but cash enough in his cabin locker to pay his harbour dues and the ship's provisions, and even if the cautious old Aberdonian would have lent me the sum required, as I believe he would, it was out of his power, since his wife, as I knew, drew his salary while he was away at sea. Only one hope I had, and that was that the merchants to whom our cargo was consigned might lend me the money on my note of hand, backed by the captain's recommendation. Alice, the good old Spanish woman, and I, lost no time, late as it was, in hurrying to the residence of the gentlemen of whom I have spoken. They were a well-known firm, Edwards and Son, and had had many dealings with my employers at Bristol.

"Mr. Edwards is absent, señor; he went yesterday by the steamer to Barcelona," said the servant who opened the door.

"Mr. James Edwards?" asked I, as my heart sank.

The man arched his eyebrows. He wondered, he said, that I was not aware that

Mr. James had been away from Malaga this week past. He was amusing himself, shooting and coursing, at a friend's country-house somewhere near Xeres de la Frontera. He was expected back for the grand bull-fight to-morrow. Mr. James had too much good taste to miss such a spectacle as that, Pedro was sure.

I turned away, feeling the bitterness of hope deferred. Still, there *was* hope. Mr. James Edwards was a very good-natured young man, not so often to be found in the counting-house as his steady and punctual father, but he had always been civil to me in our business transactions. If he should really be back in time for the bull-fight, which I now remembered was to take place on the following day, he might be persuaded to lend the needful sum. At any rate, no more could be done on that night. It was getting late. The lamps fixed beneath the effigies of saints and the few street lights, were already shining yellow through the darkness, and from tertulia gardens and the windows of wine-shops came the tinkling sound of guitars and castanets, with that of voices singing or

brawling, and the clink of glasses and stamping of feet. It was time for Alice to go home and take some rest—rest that would be needed to recruit her strength for the toil of to-morrow. I walked beside her through the dark streets, but we did not converse much. Each of us was discouraged and full of sad forebodings, and when I had said "Good night" with forced cheerfulness, and gone upon my way, the recollection of Alice Croft's pale face and wistful look haunted me. I did not at once return to my hotel, but paced the Alameda for hours, racking my brains to no purpose. And at length, when the last lounger had dropped away from the deserted promenade, and there was nothing to be heard but the rustling of the night wind through the leaves and the melancholy splashing of the fountains, I, too, went home, and, thanks to the habit of a sailor's life, slept soundly enough.

On the next morning I was early abroad. While the women were gathering with their pitchers around the fountains at the corner of the streets, and the drowsy waiters, half asleep as yet, were letting down the gaudy awnings

in front of the cafés, I sallied forth from the Hôtel de l'Alameda, unable to remain inactive, but with no clearly defined purpose. It was in vain that I tried hard to be hopeful and sanguine, and that I repeated to myself, for the twentieth time, that all would come right, on the return of Mr. James Edwards. But the young merchant might not return; he might refuse my request; any of the many petty accidents that daily occur might prevent him from granting me the favour I sought. And that a life was at stake I could not doubt. This was Tuesday. To-morrow the ransom must be forthcoming, or Alice would be left an orphan. It was in vain that I endeavoured to persuade myself that the robber captain was merely practising on the fears of his prisoner, the better to extort money. I knew but too well that Moreno was a man of his word in such matters. Ugly stories, half forgotten, which I had heard in the city or on the quays, recurred vividly to my memory now, and in many of these Moreno's name figured. Nothing was to be hoped from the bandit's clemency.

To seek the assistance of the authorities

might have seemed a natural step. But this was not to be thought of. If I complained to the corregidor, it was probable that that dreaded functionary would see in the rendezvous at the village oratory an opportunity of attempting the capture of the obnoxious Moreno, and would think more of entrapping the outlaws than of saving the life of an obscure English heretic. And any affray between the police and the robbers would only ensure the butchery of the helpless captive, while it was notoriously impossible to hunt down offenders in such a difficult district as that of the mountains above Malaga.

Meanwhile the preparations for the great bull-fight went gaily on, and as I passed the amphitheatre I heard the hammers of the workmen engaged in putting up the striped canopies that were to shelter the more aristocratic spectators from the rays of the hot sun. The savage spectacle of the day was to be an unusually grand one for Malaga, by no means the Spanish city where this favourite Spanish sport is exhibited on the largest scale. But on this occasion the Captain-General of An-

dalusia, with some foreign guests of high rank, were to honour the show with their company, and the town had gone to considerable expense in providing for their entertainment.

As early as I decently could, I called at the merchant's house, but Mr. James Edwards had, of course, not yet arrived. I had not expected him to be there so early, but my impatience would not let me rest, and I paced the town like a perturbed spirit, eyeing with indifference the motley groups of people in holiday attire who were already astir and chatting merrily over the anticipated amusements of the festival. Duty made no call on my time, for, for that day, the work of freighting the ship was suspended. Our porters and dock labourers would not have been tempted to miss the bull-fight, even by quadruple wages.

At ten o'clock I went to the Crofts' house, and saw Alice. Poor girl, the dark circles around her pretty brown eyes, dimmed by weeping, showed that her sorrows had made the night a wakeful one for her. She was feverish and agitated, at one time seeming to

partake the hopes that I expressed in the kindness of Mr. Edwards, at another, wretched and cast down, dreading the worst. In case of failure, her poor little plan was formed. She would go up, with such a small sum as she could get together, perhaps one thousand reals, to the chapel at the foot of the hills, and would try with prayers and tears to soften the ruffians who held her father prisoner. She would beg them to let him live, to restore him to her, and would promise by degrees to pay the remainder of the ransom, if she went into service to earn the money. And she really in her innocent ignorance appeared to believe in her own power to melt so hard a heart as that of Moreno, who was said to have the blood of sixteen victims on his own hand, and who was at war with the law.

I did not openly oppose this scheme, conscious that it would be well that Alice should have something on which her mind could dwell, as a relief from torturing thoughts. But I determined that she should not incur so fruitless a risk by going thus—a lamb among wolves—if I had to detain her by force. My own heart was very heavy when

I left the dear girl, making her promise to stay quietly at home and await my return, and sallied out once more into the streets of the town, now alive with merry crowds hurrying to secure good places at the show. I began to perceive how slight was the foundation on which my hopes rested, and to fear, too, that the death of her father would darken my darling's happy young life, and that she would lose the sunny freshness of her youthful mind in the pain of that sharp and bitter trial. And the unthinking mirth of the careless pleasure-seekers chafed and galled me, as the sight of merriment is apt to do in the hour of suffering.

Noon at last. I went again to the house of Mr. Edwards. Good news, as I thought, awaited me. The young merchant, with two of his friends, had arrived, and, after partaking of breakfast, had repaired to the amphitheatre, "like all the world," as the old hag of a portress, left in charge of the house while all the other servants were gone to the show, rather grudgingly remarked. To the bull ring I therefore hastened at once, and having purchased a ticket which was to admit

me to any part of the amphitheatre, elbowed my way through the swarming crowd, and entered. I had no eyes for the mass of gay-coloured apparel or the rows of eager excited faces, tier above tier, and still less for what was going on in the ring, where a young bull was being goaded to fury by sharp tridents and fluttering flags, a mere prologue to the more thrilling scenes that were to follow. But the crowd baffled me. Such multitudes from the neighbouring towns and villages, attracted by the spectacle, had poured into Malaga, that it was only for the ladies, and a favoured few of the magistracy and nobles, that seats could be retained. The rest stood so thickly massed together that I soon found that to trace out Mr. Edwards was hopeless. Giving up the effort in despair, I turned to depart, but through some mistake, instead of gaining the open air, I struck into a long passage leading I knew not whither, though I heard the bellowing of the bulls from the dens where they were shut up. Suddenly, from a sort of crypt, the half-open door of which was on my right, came the sound of voices, and I caught these words in Spanish:

"If you offer a large reward? Say four thousand reals! Consider, gentlemen, four thousand reals for an hour's work!"

My feet seemed rooted to the ground, and I felt my face flushed while I listened, as if life depended upon my overhearing what followed.

"We shall not find a man, bid what we may," said another voice, despondently; "no one not tired of his life would run the risk, and, Caramba! what will the people say? There will be a riot, and our houses may pay for it. Only think what will be the fury of the thousands up yonder when they hear that Manuel Zagal cannot perform at all, and that we have no matador to take his place."

"If the idiot had but had the sense to break his leg after the bull-fight instead of before!" said a third speaker, in a whining and querulous tone. "But, señores, what is to be done? I would sooner pay four, ay, or six thousand reals out of my own pocket, than be the one to tell the people that they are to be disappointed of the cream of the sport. They may sack our houses in revenge, and mischief will surely be done. What can we do? Not a matador worth a straw with-

in leagues, and Choco only fit to face the young bulls, and those with the wood on their horns. We shall have to use the demilune, and before the captain-general, what a disgrace!"

I began now to understand more clearly the purport of this discourse. I knew that a celebrated matador named Manuel Zagal had been engaged to come over from Seville, the head-quarters of bull-fighting, to exhibit his skill in despatching the infuriated animals that had been previously provoked to fury by their mounted tormentors the picadors. This man, who was famous for skill and courage, stood so high in his profession, that it had not been thought needful to hire any other artist in the same line, and as matadors, like opera singers, travel from place to place as their engagements serve, there was no member of the guild then in Malaga. There was, indeed, an active toreador whose nickname of Choco was well known; but this man, though a favourite with the mob, was more a buffoon than a swordsman, and had neither the dexterity nor the daring which a true matador should possess. When a matador is wounded, or

some untoward accident prevents the appearance of one, there is no resource but to end the lives of the bulls by cutting off their legs, or ham-stringing them by means of a sharp scythe on the end of a pole, called a demilune. But this barbarous expedient seldom fails to irritate the populace, who are displeased, not at the cruelty of the act, but at the absence of that risk of human life that is essential to the excitements of the bull-ring.

In this case, I could easily divine what had happened. The talented performer from Seville, Señor Manuel Zagal, had met with a serious accident, and the authorities were afraid to announce to the people what had happened, aware that a violent outbreak of popular wrath would ensue. As for the speakers, by moving forward a step I could see them. Two were in civil uniform, the alcalde of the city, and a heavy beetle-browed man, the corregidor of the police. The third was a supple, deferential personage in black, well dressed in the French style. He was the manager of the shows.

"His excellency has arrived. I hear the trumpets!" said the head of the police, gruffly;

"we must go and meet him, or we shall be thought lacking in respect. Pity there is no time to find a substitute, but who, even for four thousand reals, would face our two best bulls—the black Portuguese and the brindled Murcian, fiercer than——"

"Make the reward five thousand reals, and I am your man, noble señores," said I, with sudden resolution, emerging from my hiding-place. Had I risen, like a theatrical spectre, through a trap-door, my appearance could not have created a greater consternation. The corregidor was the first to recover his equanimity. He knit his heavy brows into a dark frown, and angrily demanded who I might be.

"Henry West, British subject, mate of the ship Tudor, now in port," was my answer; "ready to be your matador to-day, if you will raise the pay to five thousand reals."

An animated discussion then took place. The idea of a sailor, an Englishman, undertaking the difficult and perilous task of bull-killing—for the matador, as is well known, is the only person exposed to real danger—seemed absurd. But then, it was shrewdly

observed by Don Ramon, the alcalde, if I chose to get gored to death, it was no concern of theirs, and the catastrophe would at least put the people in good humour. But the worthy magistrate was reluctant to give so much as five thousand reals. If I would accept three thousand, or even four?

But I was firm. Five thousand or nothing were my terms, and as the mob began to get very noisy and impatient, the bargain was struck. An agreement was hastily written and signed by the alcalde, and a cheque for the money was drawn and entrusted to the master of the shows, to be handed to me when I should have earned it. As I traced my signature on the paper, I felt that I was bartering my own life and blood to save Alice's father. That five thousand reals would be his ransom. But I had little time to meditate, for I was hurried off to another room, and there bidden to assume, as quickly as possible, the gay costume of a matador, and in the meantime the magistrates hastened to their places, and the master of the shows went on the somewhat awkward errand of explaining to the multitude that Manuel Zagal

had broken his leg, and that a tyro would take his duties on himself.

From the dark little chamber in which I was occupied, clumsily enough, in exchanging my own clothes for the gaudy Andalusian suit which was a necessary adjunct of the character I had assumed, I could now and then catch the sound of the manager's voice, as in oily accents he addressed the enlightened audience of his patrons. At first his speech elicited much noisy disapprobation, but presently laughter and cheers drowned the oration, and when he came back he wiped his forehead with an air of self-congratulation. The audience had been restored to good humour. They had been testy and irritable, the manager told me, as he lent me his practised aid in dressing, until he reminded them that, at the worst, they had never seen an Englishman killed, and might look out for a novel excitement. "I told them, St. Martin forgive me, that you were the first toreador in all London, and had come to Spain to challenge our best bull-fighters to a contest of skill," continued the man, and then bade me look at myself in the glass. I did so, but

hardly recognised myself, so much was my appearance altered by the embroidered jacket, the slashed calzoncillos, and many-coloured silken sash, the scarf heavy with silken fringe, and all the lace, bell-buttons, and frippery of my costume. The master of the shows eyed me critically, from the broad-leaved sombrero with its red plume and golden cord, down to the pumps and silk stockings which are as essential to the matador as to a master of the ceremonies, and clapped me on the shoulder with a good-natured word or two of approval. Then he presented me with the scarlet cloak and the long straight-bladed sword, and rapidly explained to me what strokes were considered "foul," and what were in accordance with the etiquette of this gory pastime. He was by no means ill-natured, and did his best to encourage me, offering me wine and refreshments, and insisting that I should swallow at least one goblet of strong Calcavella.

"Cheer up comrade," said he, "keep cool, avoid the first rush, and you may get off with unbroken bones and a whole skin. Throw the cloak well over his horns, and drive in the

sword thus, turning the wrist in this manner, and avoiding the breastbone. Never be in a hurry, or you are lost. I have seen old hands lose their heads at the first roar and dash of a hurt bull, but I like you, lad, schismatic as you are, and I don't want to see you go out feet foremost. Let me feel your pulse." And he took my wrist between his fingers, probably to ascertain if I were too much flurried by the approach of danger to attend to his instructions. However, he released my hand, muttering with something of genuine admiration in his tone, "Those island mastiffs! a tough breed!"

He then conducted me to a nook whence I could see through a small window which commanded a good view of the arena and of the spectators above, while the close trellis-work of rusty iron prevented the occupant of the lair from being visible. And then, bidding me be of good courage, he left me to attend to his duties. I was alone, though I could hear the hoarse bellowing of the bulls confined in dens near me; and now for the first time I had leisure to realise the rashness of my undertaking. I had followed the bidding of

theatre. And now a fine bull, with wide-spreading horns, was in possession of the ring. This animal, however, disappointed the amateurs of the arena by showing more desire to escape than ferocity. He ran round and round, seeking an outlet, and bellowing piteously, as the active toreadors on foot, with banners and scarfs, ran nimbly around him, taunting and teasing him, until his hide was like a pincushion stuck full of tiny barbed darts adorned with coloured paper. Of this, too, the people grew weary, and a general shout arose:

"Toros! toros! the Murcian bull at once! No, the Portuguese! Let the English matador show us what stuff he is made of. Toros!"

The manager looked up appealingly to the captain-general, and, receiving an august nod of permission, bustled out. Very soon there was a flourish of trumpets, and then a deep roar, and then, amid clapping of hands and huzzaing of countless voices, the brindled Murcian bull came at a heavy canter into the ring, stopped short, lifted his head, and gave a second roar of impatient anger. A noble beast he was, and the populace enthusías-

tically shouted forth their comments on his tossing mane, his deep chest, his dauntless look, the strength of his limbs, and the sharpness of his horns. Then to the sound of martial music, in poured the mounted picadors, two and two, fluttering with bright ribands, and dressed in the old Castilian garb. They lowered their lances before the captain-general, and rode three times round the arena to exhibit their bright scarfs and rich jackets, while the cymbals clashed and the drums rolled out their loudest notes. The bull pawed the ground, distended his nostrils, and, with a short bellowing cry, stooped his head and began the attack. The words "Bravo, toro!" rent the very sky.

It was a butcherly business at best, though I admit that the rich dresses, the long lances, and waving of scarf, and riband, and plume, gave a false glitter and gallantry to what was really a very dastardly and disgusting scene. The picadors, padded as they were, and furnished with immense boots through which the bull's horns could not pierce, while scores of watchful attendants stood ready to distract the animal's attention in case of need, or to

carry off a prostrate combatant, were safe enough. But the bull, itself bleeding from the repeated lance-thrusts, did great execution among the horses, plunging his sharp horns into their quivering flanks again and again, and inflicting ghastly wounds, while still the wretched steeds went reeling round the ring, until loss of blood made them drop down dying on the ensanguined sand. And still the music played its most stirring strains, and still the people shouted, while the ladies waved fans and handkerchiefs in token of applause, and all the gory savagery of the Spanish national sport went on with sickening repetition. At last, nine horses being dead or frightfully injured, two picadors having been bruised by falling against the oaken barriers, and the bull being much spent, the remaining horsemen left the ring. Ropes and hooks were fixed to the carcases of the slain horses, and they were dragged away, and fresh sand and sawdust were thrown down. It was time for the matador to appear.

"Now, Englishman, they are waiting for you. Remember the thrust, and be cool," whispered the manager. He led me into

the ring, and I made my bow to the captain-general, and another to the audience, while the manager, with much grandiloquence, presented me to the public as "Don Enriquez, of London, the distinguished volunteer, who had so kindly undertaken to fill the office of the eminent Manuel Zagal." Scarcely had the finished this speech before the bull began to advance, and my introducer hastily retired. I stood alone in the ring, my heart beating thickly, and a red film seeming to obscure my dazzled eyes, while the clamour of the crowd, and the consciousness that I was the mark on which thousands were gazing in pitiless expectation, almost unnerved me. I had faced danger before, but not in such a shape, and I am not ashamed to own that for a moment my knees felt strangely weak, and my pulses fluttered like a bird over which the hawk hovers. Then came back the thought of Alice, and I was myself once more. Disregarding the spectators, I bent my whole attention on the bull, which was slowly approaching me, with its head bent down, and bloody foam dropping from its lips. I steadied myself on my feet, carrying

the cloak gathered up on my left arm, and with my right I kept the sword pointed to the earth, ready to spring aside when my antagonist should charge. But the bull was more hurt than I had expected. His movements were slow and painful, and the blood trickled fast from his brindled flanks. His rolling eyes fixed upon me, then he gave a roar, and dashed at me, while, following the manager's instructions, I avoided him by springing aside. I thought the animal would have wheeled to renew the attack, but the last rush had manifestly exhausted his remaining strength. He fell on his knees, and did not rise till the men on foot beset him with squibs and darts, when pain and fury revived his forces, and he again made a floundering charge. This time I stepped aside, and, without throwing the cloak over the bull's horns, plunged the sword into his neck. He fell, and the audience set up a shout of "Well done, Inglese!"

"That was an easy victory," whispered my friend, the manager, as he led me off, after making my bow to the people; "but don't let it make you rash. The poor brute was

bleeding to death; anybody could see that! It will be different with the black Portuguese."

And so it proved, for the audience loudly demanded that the lances of the picadors should be tipped with wood, all save a point two inches long, so that the next bull should show better sport. And, not to dwell on details, after five or six horses had been disabled, the picadors retired, and amid a flourish of trumpets I was placed face to face with the black Portuguese bull.

"Bravo, toro! look what a wicked eye he has! I bet an ounce of gold on the bull!" shouted one amateur, springing to his feet, and there was a burst of laughter at the offer of this wager, but a breathless silence succeeded as I advanced, step by step, towards where the bull stood, pawing up the loose sand with his fore feet, and roaring low, as he watched me. He was a superb beast, very large, but a model of symmetry, and his sable coat, spotted now with froth and gore, was as glossy as satin. He was very little hurt; his bloodshot eyes rolled fiercely; he was evidently gathering breath to renew the battle.

On my part, I was well aware that my life hung by a thread, but that if I could conquer this one bull, the last survivor, my work would be done, and the money—the price of a man's safety—would be earned. A hasty word of prayer rose from my heart to my lips, and I advanced, cautiously but firmly. The bull appeared to be in no hurry. He waited, with heaving flanks, close to one of the barriers, while I drew near.

"Have a care, Englishman, have a care! he means mischief!" cried some well-meaning spectator in the front row. Scarcely were the words uttered, before with a deep and sudden roar the black bull came thundering down upon me in headlong charge. It was all that I could do to spring aside, and the bull, unable to check himself, dashed his head against the wooden barriers with a violence that made many women in the lower tier scream with affright. But with great quickness the huge beast recovered himself, and came rushing towards me, with his head low. Again I sprang aside, but so narrow was my escape that one of the sharp horns caught the sleeve of my gaudy jacket, and ripped

it open from wrist to elbow, while the applause of the audience followed the stroke. Before I could use my sword, the bull nimbly wheeled, and I was forced to trust for my life to my superior speed of foot, running round the ring, hotly chased by the bull, whose feet sank in the loose sand. I then turned, and made an ineffectual effort to throw the red cloak over the eyes of my terrible antagonist, but the crafty beast eluded me, and this time, as I sprang out of its way, I felt a sharp pang in my left arm and side, and staggered back, almost dropping the sword. The people set up a cry:

"Toro! Viva El Negro! the black bull for ever! Well done, bull; I see the Englishman's blood."

A crimson mist floated before my eyes, I grew dizzy, and the roar of the audience confused me. Was all indeed lost? Half mechanically, while the blood ebbed from my wounded arm, I looked around me. The bull was close by. I saw his glaring eyes and tossing horns; he lowered his head, and made a fresh charge. Hardly knowing what I did, I thrust forward the long strong-bladed

On my p matador, and planted my feet
by a thr then there was a crash and a
one bull, roar, and I was beaten to the
be don rose again, feebly, and then I
man's on my sword, reeling like a
word o man, as the manager supported me
and I bow to the audience, while the
bull ap O, well done the Englishman!
with l Viva! Well done!" rose from thou-
barrier throats. Close beside me lay the
"Il of the black Portuguese bull. My
he mea reached its heart. The next thing
spectat ber was that I lay, half swooning, on
the wo ress in one of the inner crypts of the
sudden theatre, while a doctor was binding up
down rts.
all tha Considerable hæmorrhage, but no artery
unabl ed, after all!" said the French sur-
again; "let us see the other wound. Bah! a
that graze. You have escaped bel et bien,
screa young friend, after all!"
ness So it proved. I suffered no inconvenience
cam ond loss of blood from the injury I had
Agi ived, and the money I had earned being
esc warded by a safe hand to the place of
the ndezvous on the following day, Mr. Croft

was set at liberty. Moreno proved a man of his word, being equally willing to release a captive whose ransom was paid, as to poniard an insolvent prisoner. I will not attempt to describe Alice's joy at being reunited to the father whom she had mourned as dead, nor the mingled terror and gratitude with which the darling girl learned the desperate means I had taken to save him. I am captain of the Tudor now, and she is my wife, and in our English home, in which we have lived happily together for so long, she has often recalled, with tears and smiles, that episode in our lives which was so nearly proving tragical at Malaga.

THE POLISH DESERTER.

A STEALTHY step in the corridor, the faint rustle of a woman's garments, and then there was a low tap at the door, and a voice said softly in the French language,

"Doctor, monsieur, are you awake? Come and speak to me, but hist! be careful, for the love of Heaven!"

The summons rather startled me, as I sat in my lonely room, late on the third night after my arrival at the castle, writing a long letter to Alice in England. It was for her sake—Alice Wilson's—that I was in Poland, and at Miklitz, the mansion of Count Emmanuel Oginski, whose household surgeon I was. The count was one of the chief nobles of the kingdom; his forefathers had been

Palatines in the days of Polish independence; his domains were great, and his revenues, in spite of neglect, considerable. The possessor of all these advantages was, however, anything but happy. He had wretched health, his naturally good parts were rusted by sloth, and his kindly disposition was fast growing irritable and morbidly sad. I had been given to understand, by the friend who had procured me the well-paid situation I now filled, that Count Oginski had fallen under the displeasure of the Russian Government. This was not from any act of his own, for my employer had been scrupulous in his avoidance of politics. His son, however, Emile Oginski, had been convicted of some share in a conspiracy to throw off the Muscovite yoke, and had been punished by being forced into the ranks of the army, and sent to serve as a private in the Caucasus, with the regiment of Astrakhan.

Two years had elapsed since this harsh sentence had been carried into effect, and the young heir to a proud name and fair estate, a mere boy in years, easily tempted into the rash plot whose detection had brought the

Czar's vengeance on his head, had never since been suffered to communicate with his parents. Count Oginski had in vain invoked all the influence of his powerful relatives; and the mother of the poor boy, a high-spirited woman, who had never been willing to appear at the imperial court, had conquered her Polish prejudices so far as to travel to St. Petersburg, and kneel at the Emperor's feet to solicit the pardon of her son. But Nicholas considered mercy as mere weakness, and the suppliant was coldly dismissed. At the same time an order was transmitted from the Chancellerie of St. Petersburg that the count, who had long resided in Italy during most part of the year, should not quit the Russian dominions without a special authorisation from the Czar. And it was thought indulgent by the bureaucrats of the capital to give "the father of a traitor" the choice between St. Petersburg and his own Polish estates in the government of Kalisch. Thus it came about that the count, suffering from gout, rheumatism, and a lack of educated companions, wrote to a friend in London to express his desire for an English medical

attendant, while the high salary tempted me, a poor young surgeon who had only just taken his doctor's degree, and who had been for years engaged to a clergyman's daughter who was good and pretty, but poor as himself.

And now, when my long letter descriptive of the strange place and strange people—a letter that might have wearied others, but which I knew Alice would read over and over again with fond interest in every detail—when this letter was half finished, there came the midnight summons I have spoken of. Opening the door, I found myself confronted by the countess. She was very pale, and she trembled, and I fancied there were marks of tears hastily dried upon her face, but her eyes were unusually bright, and had the restless craving look often seen in those of some hunted creature. As she stood in the silent corridor, hung with moth-eaten tapestry, her dark hair—streaked with early grey that was due to sorrow more than years—falling in disorder over her white wrapper, and a small silver lamp flickering in her unsteady hand, she looked more like a spirit than a living woman.

"Madame," I said, "I am at your orders, but I hope there is no cause for alarm. The count——"

She interrupted me by a hasty gesture: "The count is sleeping. He is not ill; it is not on his account that—ah! M. le Docteur! can I trust you? Will you help me, and be careful and silent?"

I stammered out some common-place assurance of my willingness to do all in my power to render service to the family, but I dare say I was awkward in my speech, being not only unpractised in French conversation, but sorely puzzled by the visit. Hitherto, I had only known the mistress of the house as a somewhat proud and stately lady, with a grave gentleness of bearing, equally remote from cordiality or haughtiness. And now this marble figure, so cold and impassive, agitated, fearful, and with glittering eyes and loosened hair, a prey to some inexplicable terror and excitement! Was the countess mad! No doubt she read the doubts that were passing through my mind, for she conquered her own emotion and addressed me in a calm voice, and in a low and wary tone. She wanted my

aid, she said, for a sick person who had just arrived at Miklitz, and whose arrival, for weighty reasons, must be kept a secret from the household. The sufferer was—would I promise, as an English gentleman and a man of honour, not to reveal a word she told me, till I had permission from herself?—the sufferer was a poor lad, the son of a former steward, and who had left the Russian regiment to which he belonged, without leave.

"He is a deserter, then, madame?"

The countess slowly bent her head, and for a moment or two tried to speak, but her voice failed her. Then, to my surprise and dismay, she sprang forward, dropped on her knees, and caught my hand in both of hers, passionately crying aloud:

"Forgive me, monsieur, if I tried to deceive you. I will trust you; I know I may do so safely. He is my son, my only son, my dear, dear boy, come back from the Caucasus, wounded, famished, to die at the threshold of his father's house, which he must not enter!"

Here the mother's voice broke into stifling sobs, and it was with great difficulty, and only by representing the risk of alarming the

household, that I succeeded in raising her from the ground and soothing her to a more reasonable frame of mind. At last she was able to tell me the rest.

"I could not sleep," she said eagerly, "and I looked out of the window into the great garden, where the fountains were playing, and all was bright moonlight up to the verge of the belt of dark oaks. It was then I saw him, Emile, but so wan and haggard, so ill and emaciated, in a tattered caftan and cap, like those of a Russian peasant, that none but a mother's eyes could have recognised him. His eyes were dim, and his left arm was bandaged with a bloody cloth; but it was Emile, my dear boy, that I have seen in my dreams every night since the cruel day of his sentence. He was so ghastly, standing out in the wan moonlight, that I feared he was dead, far off, and that his shadow was come to warn me that we should meet no more. But he looked up and saw me. And I lighted my lamp, and went down, and undid the door, and went out. And it was my Emile, alive, but dying, doctor."

With all my heart, I offered every assis-

tance in my power. The most cruel part of the matter was, that we dared not bring the sufferer—for the poor lad was smarting under the effects of a gun-shot wound, aggravated by privation and neglect—into the house, nor even reveal his presence to any one, his father not excepted. The count—as his wife reluctantly owned—could never in his life keep a secret, and his nervous temperament would infallibly lead to a betrayal of the fugitive's position, should he learn the truth suddenly. Most of the servants were faithful and trusty, but there were some on whose discretion no reliance could be placed: while one in especial, the major-domo, a Courlander by birth, and who had been recommended by the governor of Kalisch, was suspected of being a spy. To harbour a deserter, particularly one whose service in the ranks was the chastisement of rebellion, was to commit an offence which Nicholas never pardoned. If it were known that Emile Oginski were sheltered beneath the roof under which he was born, the ruin of the family was certain to result, while the youth himself would be sentenced to the knout.

There was an outhouse, a sort of grange,

over which were two rude chambers, intended to accommodate husbandmen at the season of harvest, but which had for some time been unoccupied. This building, old and ruinous, would prove a safer shelter than the castle, and there would be no prying eyes there. Food and clothing could be conveyed there, and, under my care, Emile might perhaps recover his health and take some opportunity of crossing the Prussian frontier, which was at no great distance. Though even on Prussian soil, as a deserter, young Oginski was liable to extradition on the demand of the Russian government. There was no safety for the hunted wretch, short of the civilised kingdoms of Western Europe. All this was sufficiently clear and coherent, and I could not but admire the prudence and forethought with which maternal affection had inspired the speaker. In as few words as possible, I pledged myself to secresy, and snatching up my little medicine chest and a pocket flask of brandy, I signified to the countess that I was ready to follow her. Under her guidance, and treading with extreme caution, I contrived to reach the door that opened on

the garden without arousing any one, though it was necessary to pass several doors, standing half open, according to the careless custom of Polish domestics, and from which issued the sound of the heavy breathing of sleepers. We were soon out upon the smoothly-mown lawn, speckled by the dead leaves that had fallen during that autumn evening, and the sickly gleam of the moon fell on the fountains, on the statues, on the withering flowers, and the softly swaying boughs of the dark trees. But no human form could be seen, and the idea occurred to me that the whole must be a delusion, a mocking vision seen by the eye of overstrained imagination.

"I bade him wait. I said I would soon return. Emile, Emile!" whispered the poor mother, gradually raising her voice. But there was no reply. The countess trembled so much that, but for my support, she would have sunk to the ground. Suddenly she bent forward, uttered a low cry, "There! he is there!" and darted across the lawn to where, at the foot of a spreading chesnut-tree, lay something hardly to be seen by my duller eyes. I found that the unfortunate

young man was really lying there, motionless, in the deep shadow. He was dressed in the tattered and travel-stained garb of a Russian peasant, his shoes were worn away by rough travel, and his feet were cruelly scarred and bleeding. There was a gory rag wrapped round his left arm, and his matted hair hung wildly about a haggard young face that must have been handsome once. His lips were white; his eyes closed.

"He is dead," said the countess, breaking out into a low wail, as she kneeled on the wet turf and gazed with despairing eyes upon the prostrate form beside her.

"No, madame, he has only fainted. There is a pulse, though a very feeble one, and the heart beats; if I can get him to swallow a few drops of this brandy, he will revive." I lifted the passive head, and forced a small quantity of the cordial between the pale lips. By chafing the cold hands, and by repeating small doses of the spirit, we managed with some trouble to restore the sufferer's senses; but his strength was quite gone. He had been so spent by loss of blood and almost unheard-of hardships, hunted like a wolf

through the forests, that all the strength of his youthful constitution had been exhausted. Like some wounded animal, he had made a desperate exertion to reach his native scenes and die at home, but the effort had been too severe, and the last of his forces had been expended in the struggle. He was conscious of his mother's presence and caresses, but he could not speak or stand, and it was necessary to carry him to the old grange, as if he had been a sick child.

More than an hour was now spent in providing, as well as circumstances allowed, for the poor fugitive. There was nothing in the deserted building but some trusses of straw, and two or three wooden bedsteads like those commonly found in a military guard-room. Food, water, warm clothes, bedding, must all be brought, though at the imminent risk of detection. The countess went untiringly on this errand, again and again, gliding through the house, and returning with linen, wine, blankets, and so forth, while I remained with the patient, doing whatever my experience could suggest to keep alight the flickering lamp of life. We did not leave him until

sparingly fed (for he was suffering from actual famine, and a free supply of nourishment would have proved fatal) and warmly wrapped up, he had sunk into the deep and dreamless sleep of exhaustion.

From that night forth, an atmosphere of mystery, concealment, and apprehension, seemed to extend itself over all things. There was a patient to be cared for, a secret to be kept, a human being to be secluded from the observation of even friendly eyes. It was necessary to disguise the fact of Emile's proximity from his own father: a deception by no means to my taste, and galling to the frank and noble nature of the countess, in whom her invalid husband reposed the fullest confidence. But the more I reflected, the more perilous did it seem to afford Count Emmanuel any information on the subject of his son's refuge. He was unsuspicious by instinct and by habit, spoke freely of his affairs before his domestics, and felt the most perfect assurance of the devotion and attachment, not only of his Polish servants, but of Glittstein, the major-domo, who was, as I have said, a Courlander.

Of this man the countess entertained suspicions which I was inclined to treat as the results of national prejudice. Personally, I was rather disposed to like the Russo-German, who was a fine portly fellow, with a shining bald head fringed with yellow hair, bright blue eyes, and a pleasant smile. He was an excellent servant, and his punctual neatness contrasted favourably with the thoughtlessness of the Poles. I might have shared the lady's antipathy, had Glittstein been a velvet-footed, sly-faced sycophant, gliding cat-like through the house, but there was something bluff and down-right in the major-domo's speech and bearing that pleased me.

On the very morning that succeeded the night of the young man's arrival, a startling incident occurred. It was a cold moist morning, and the lazy white fog clung like a ragged veil of half transparent gauze to meadow and forest, while the mist hovered in thicker masses over the many pools and morasses of the low-lying landscape. The count was unwell and restless, and ate his breakfast in a desultory fashion : now listlessly trifling with a morsel of toast, now rising

languidly to gaze out of the window on the melancholy prospect, and now, as he drew his elbow-chair nearer to the great stove, desiring a servant to bring him an exact report of the last reading of a new barometer from Paris or London. The master of Miklitz was very curious in all weather-predicting instruments, and the hall was full of aneroids and wheel-glasses, whose French-polished mahogany and burnished brass seemed out of place among the grim wolf-heads and spreading antlers, the spears, nets, and antique weapons.

"A miserable morning, Dr. Burton!" said Count Emmanuel, pushing away his cup; "the forerunner of a winter such as you cannot realise till you have felt it; a winter that nips and pinches you, chills you and wets you, all at once. Even St. Petersburg is pleasanter, as being dryer. Bah! What cruelty of the government to compel a crippled martyr like myself, M. le Docteur, to leave dear beautiful Italy, with a sun that really shines—Eh? Adeline, what is amiss?"

The countess had started from her chair, and stood listening eagerly to some

faint sound which no ear, unsharpened by strong emotion, could have detected. My senses are tolerably quick, but I could hear nothing. A minute passed, and I thought I heard something like a dull far-off beat of horses' feet.

"Soldiers! They have come to seek him! He is lost!" murmured the poor mother, but in so low a tone that the rash words were heard by none but myself—unless, indeed, Glittstein, who was handing some cordial to his master, had caught them.

In a few moments all doubts were set at rest by the arrival of a commissary of police, accompanied by several agents and a party of dragoons, to search the castle for the apprehension of Emile Oginski, political offender, and deserter from the regiment of Astrakhan. Very particular orders to secure the person of this young man had arrived by telegraph from St. Petersburg, and no retreat appeared so likely to shelter him as his father's house.

Two hours, two long and painful hours, were consumed in a minute search of the extensive mansion, which was rummaged from the garret and turret-chambers to the cellars.

The servants were rigorously cross-examined, and the official in command entered into an artfully managed conversation with the count, whose easy disposition was well known, insomuch that the authorities felt assured of being able to worm out the truth from him. But the count knew nothing, and the astonishment with which he heard of his unfortunate son's flight was too genuine to be mistaken by so practised an observer as the commissary. The servants also, being wholly ignorant of their young lord's return, could not possibly betray him, either by awkward zeal or venal perfidy, and the police were at last fain to believe that no person of the household had the slightest idea that the fugitive had even committed the offence of desertion. Fortunately the countess was asked no questions, nor was it thought worth while to examine myself, a foreigner newly arrived. The out-buildings underwent no scrutiny, for the agents were convinced, long before the mansion was explored, that no one had seen the runaway, and that without having been seen he could not be here.

"He never got out of the forest of Pylclovicz, where he was last seen by a charcoal-

burner," said the commissary in a testy manner, as he took his leave. "I told our lord the governor that mortal limbs could not have borne such a journey as that from the wood hither. And now, perhaps, some booby of a village headman will get the reward after all."

The police and troops went off in a crestfallen style, like foxes baffled in an inroad on a poultry-yard, and the servants, male and female, watched them as they rode down the avenue, and followed their retiring forms with suppressed curses and jeering laughter.

The conduct of Glittstein during this domiciliary visit had been very satisfactory. He was present when the commissary announced his errand, and when Emile's escape was proclaimed; and the look of surprise with which he received the news was evidently genuine. When the police were searching the house, his broad face wore an expression of concern and disgust; he did not scowl or mutter maledictions, as the Poles did, but held himself aloof; and I thought I could read in his intelligent countenance not only sympathy for the distress of the family, but an honest man's natural repugnance to tyranny.

"What would they say to this in England, Herr Burton?" he asked, in a cautious tone, as I passed him.

"What indeed, Glittstein!"

The troubles of the Oginski family were by no means at an end. Two days after the withdrawal of the baffled gendarmes, there arrived an imperative mandate, sent by telegraph to the governor of the province, and transmitted as rapidly as man and horse could bear it to the castle. Count Emmanuel was required immediately to present himself before the authorities at St. Petersburg, there to remain until he had satisfied the Czar of his innocence of any complicity in his son's desertion.

A painful dilemma now arose. Disobedience was not to be dreamed of, and the count at once prepared to depart, but would have preferred to be accompanied on his dismal northern journey by his wife and his medical attendant. Under ordinary circumstances, the countess would have gone with her invalid husband without hesitation, but now—when her son lay, worn out and wounded, perhaps dying, on a mean bed in

a neglected outhouse, it was impossible. It was equally out of the question that I, whose professional care was necessary to the sufferer's recovery, should absent myself from Miklitz.

The count went alone. How it was managed in detail I do not bear in mind, but the countess feigned severe indisposition, and this afforded a plea for retaining the English doctor at Miklitz. The count was, as I have said before, the most trustful of men. He would not hear of my leaving the countess, and was considerate enough to leave Glittstein, his right hand man, whom he accounted a treasure of sense and fidelity, to help us, taking with him only his Polish valet.

The object of so much hostility, tenderness, and pity, lay passive and prostrate, in a condition between life and death. We could only visit him by stealth, and it was with much difficulty that we could convey to his comfortless lair the supplies of which he stood in need. He was very, very ill. The gunshot wound in his arm gave me a good deal of anxiety, for the bone was badly shattered and exfoliated, and the wonder was that

gangrene had not already ensued. But my chief fear was that the terrible exertions of that long journey through forest and over bleak steppes, with its attendant hunger and hardships, would prove too much for even a sound and youthful constitution.

It was long before the patient could find strength for anything like a continuous narrative of his escape and the causes of his desertion. It was a tale not merely of privation and toil, and barbarous warfare on a rugged frontier, but of studied insults, unjust punishments, and a deliberate purpose to break the spirit and crush the heart of every one of these unfortunate exiles. He had fought and marched, had endured the hardest details of a hard life, with an unflinching and uncomplaining courage that was due to his Polish pride, but he had been at last compelled to become "dushtek," or servant, to a Russian major.

"He was a cruel coward, the most hated of all our tyrants," said the young man, feebly; "he taunted me, he spoke to me as if I were his dog; he mocked my country and my creed; he made my tasks, and the bread

I ate, as bitter and as odious as a petty despot could. ` One day he struck me across the face with his cane. Next moment he lay at my feet, calling for help, and I fled."

How he had formed the bold resolve to regain his home in West Poland, penniless and on foot; how he had journeyed, hiding in the woods by day, and travelling by night; how the peasants had sometimes given him food and shelter, and at other times had turned out to hunt him down in hopes of reward; all this he told in simple and modest words. Also, how he had changed clothes with a Malorossian serf, who had given him an old caftan and cap in exchange for his uniform coat; and how, soon afterwards, the tidings of his escape having preceded him, he had been pursued by a troop of Cossacks, and had received his wound from one of their musket-balls, while in the act of scrambling up the steep bank of a river which he had swum, and which had baffled the horsemen. Finally, how, famished, cramped in every joint and sinew, he had dragged himself with bleeding and crippled feet to the door of his father's house, at which he had not dared to

knock, and was watching the windows when his mother saw him.

A gallant lad he was, slender and graceful of figure, rather active than strong, and with a handsome face enough, when once it began to lose the gaunt famine-stricken look which it wore at first. When the crisis of his illness was past, and his recovery became only a question of time, we contrived to remove him to a lodge in the forest, a mile or more from the castle, which was tenanted by a woodsman, whose wife had been his nurse. These good people were wholly trustworthy, and would have borne torture or death, I believe, sooner than betray their young lord. They cared for him with the utmost affection: and Michael, the woodsman, actually relinquished his Sunday visit to the brandy-shop which a Jew kept in the village, lest he should in his cups let slip any unwary allusion.

The winter had now set in with much severity, but Count Emmanuel did not return from St. Petersburg. His letters were few, and cautiously worded, as if the writer knew that they would have to pass the ordeal of the Secret Scrutiny Bureau in the Russian

post-office; but he spoke of occasional interviews with the ministers and the emperor, and of his hope that he might soon be able to quit the metropolis. Of his son he said little, and that little was cold and artificially expressed; not that the count was without paternal affection, but because of the strict supervision under which he, as the father of a "delinquent," was placed.

Emile could walk now, though not very vigorously, nor was it deemed wise for him to stir abroad. A proclamation had been largely circulated in the province, offering a reward of eight thousand roubles—four times the amount first proposed—for the capture of the deserter Oginski. So high a price would never have been set on him, of course, but that he was a man of rank, and heir to a fine estate, which could not legally be confiscated, unless he had been tried and convicted of desertion and mutiny. Emile, knouted and imprisoned in Siberia, would lose his civil rights, and the state might inherit at Count Emmanuel's decease; but Emile at liberty and across the borders, could not be so summarily disposed of. In such a case

the Czar could only condemn him as "contumacious," and the property would hereafter be sequestrated, instead of permanently confiscated.

The proclamation was affixed to trees, posted up in markets, and made widely known, but all in vain. Many of the greedier peasants and of the Jewish inhabitants were rumoured to have expressed a longing hope that such a prize might fall in their way; but the labourers on the Oginski estate tore down every one of the detested placards within their reach, and the fierce Slachsiz, or peasant nobles of the province, made no secret of their intention to put to death any traitor who might betray young Oginski into Muscovite hands. Some such threat, ill-written and ill-spelt, but penned in stern earnest, was to be seen scrawled at the foot of every copy of the manifesto that yet adhered to a wall or tree.

Yet I could not but agree with the countess, that the earliest opportunity of getting the young man safe over the frontier ought to be embraced. How to effect this escape was not so clear. Prussia was not far off, but

the frontier guards were on the alert, and so were prowling detachments of Cossacks. Money, horses, and a disguise, had to be provided; and we dared not remove any horse from the castle lest the grooms should suspect the reason.

Three months after Emile's arrival, on a crisp frosty morning when the ice sparkled like flawed crystals on every pool and runlet of water, and the snow upon the dark pine-boughs gleamed doubly white and pure in the sunlight, I set off to walk to the lodge. No one in Poland ever dreams of walking for mere pleasure. To account for my being often afoot, I always carried a gun, and occasionally shot a few squirrels or hares. There was a good deal of snow on the ground, and my footsteps made so little noise, that two men, in close conversation beside an enormous pile of rudely hewn logs, did not observe my approach.

"Six out of the eight thousand roubles are mine! Remember that! If I trap the bird, I do not choose to be cheated of my fair share of the roast, Isaac. The place is too good a one to lose gratis;

besides, I shall have made Kalisch too hot to hold me."

It was Glittstein's voice. I bent forward, and, cautiously peering round the corner of the wood pile, beheld the worthy major-domo in company with a red-bearded man in a Jewish dress, but whose flat Tartar countenance matched ill with his Hebrew robe. The latter drew out a folded paper, cast a quick glance to left and right, and handed the paper to Glittstein, saying, in a coaxing tone, in German:

"There, there, excellent brother Glittstein —be pacified, I pray you. Here is a promise under the governor's own hand and seal. Six thousand roubles, and promotion in the Warsaw police office. You are to be a commissary, and in the secret department, on the day when Emile Oginski is brought before the court-martial. Come, good friend, we mean fairly by you. Do you, on your part, be ready to point out the hiding-place of the young count. In an hour, our men will be here."

I think the wretch said more, but I had heard enough. I withdrew as silently as I had approached, and hurried back to the

house. In five minutes, the countess knew all. Glittstein's treachery was clear, and it was also evident that by some means, perhaps by dogging his mistress, or myself, or both, in our frequent visits to the hut where the young man lay concealed, the false major-domo had discovered the lurking-place. There was little leisure for thought. In one short hour the soldiery would arrive, and the wood would be surrounded by armed men. The countess bore the cruel tidings bravely, nerving herself, for her son's sake, to be calm and resolute.

"We might resist," she said, with a bright but steady eye, glancing over the snow-encumbered plains. "There are nine true Poles among the servants, and Michael, and the four mowers, and Karel the smith, and the tall sawyer and his son, with Demetrius at the farm, and all the quarrymen. Twenty-five good muskets, and a breast-work of trees such as the axe would pile up in half an hour, and Polish hearts behind it—ah, no! my good, kind husband. Flight is the only hope! Yet Emile is weak and ill yet—and to fly alone——"

"Not alone. I will go with him," I exclaimed; "he is not strong enough to endure alone, but with my help I think he may make shift. By striking through the woods, in four hours' time we may touch Prussian ground. The horses—"

Here the countess interrupted in turn, hastily informing me that the men-servants were all gone to a wedding in the village, and that I could remove two strong horses from the stable without being observed. Even as she spoke, she unlocked a cabinet, and drew out a heavy purse of gold, which she had provided to aid Emile's escape, and which she put into my hands, with a thousand thanks and blessings, and fond messages to her son, mingled with entreaties that I would not lose an instant. I rushed down stairs, catching up a whip as I passed the hall, ran to the stable, and hastily saddled two horses; the black which I usually rode, and a fiery chesnut of great fleetness and power. My fingers trembled so much that I could hardly adjust the bridles. As I buckled the last strap, the open door was filled by a dark figure—Glittstein! I had

just turned the chesnut in his stall, and the eyes of the major-domo met mine, and each of us read in the other's glance that his secret was known.

An evil look came over Glittstein's face, and he strode forward and snatched the bridle rudely from my hand, saying:

"Nein, nein, Herr Englander; your pretty little pleasure-trip is spoiled."

I have never clearly remembered how I did it; but in a moment the spy lay grovelling on the floor, with my foot on his breast. Glittstein was a cowardly creature, and begged for mercy in abject language. He offered no resistance when I bound his hands tightly with an old girth, tied him to one of the wooden pillars, and bade him stir or speak at his peril. I then led out the horses, closed the door, and mounted. As I did so, my horse laid back his ears, snorted, and pawed the earth, and the fiery chesnut neighed long and shrill. To my dismay, the neigh was answered by other horses afar off, and then came a long wailing note of the Cossack trumpet. The Czar's bloodhounds were before the hour named for the rendezvous. I

darted into the wood, the led horse rearing and plunging, and giving me some trouble. Looking back, I saw a flash of steel between the trees of the avenue, and I heard Glittstein, who had probably caught the sound of the trumpet-call bawling in the stable, and roaring in German and Russian for help.

Emile, when I arrived at the lodge, was not much surprised by the sudden summons to fly. He came to the door, accompanied by Michael and his wife, both uttering exclamations of alarm, while the children set up a wail of terror.

"I have been expecting this for many a day and night, doctor," said he, smiling. "I hope to escape, if only for my poor mother's sake, but in no case shall they take me alive. Give me the pistols, Michael; I loaded them yesterday. Farewell, Nurse Katrina! farewell, Michael! and you, good doctor—you go with me, you say? My mother ought not to have asked so dangerous a service from you, Burton. Those Cossacks are wolves when they scent blood and plunder."

I assured him that my mind was made up. I had promised, and even had I not promised,

I would not have abandoned him in his weak state. He wrung my hand, and mounted without further parley. Away we went along the ride, the frozen snow cranching beneath our feet, and the dry branches cracking. Quick as we were, we had scarcely emerged from the forest into a region of morass and scrubby brushwood, beyond which gleamed, iron grey, the frozen lake of Vartha, when a long-drawn whoop rang through the frosty air, and was followed by two or three twanging notes of the trumpet, quick imperious calls for stragglers to close up. Then, looking back, we saw the whole troop of wild riders, some sixty strong, come dashing over the heath towards us, their lance-heads and gun-barrels glittering in the rays of the wintry sun. We doubled our speed.

"Steady, Burton, steady!" exclaimed young Oginski. "A stumble may cost us our lives. Beware of that green bit of ground where the snow has thawed away; it is a bog that would swallow a squadron, horse and man; keep to the right. We must push for the causeway that spans the morass, or we shall get to a creek of the Vartha that cannot be crossed.

The ice would bear us, but the banks are rotten and unsafe. A tight rein, and a keen eye for deep drifts, and we shall sleep in Prussia yet."

Emile had ridden with his greyhounds or his gun over most of the country around, and his knowledge of its localities did us infinite service. At times he seemed at fault, but his memory would soon revive, and he would recollect every knoll and dyke of that difficult district. But fast as we went, we could not shake off the pursuers. It was impossible to help noticing, with a sort of unwilling admiration, how warily and well those wild horsemen made their way through the broken ground, scenting danger with an instinct that never erred. Their long habit of ranging savage plains made them fully a match for Emile's experience.

At Emile himself I looked with some anxiety. I knew that he was weak, much weaker than he would allow, that his left arm was stiff and painful, and that he had lately shown symptoms like those of incipient consumption. He was pale, with a hectic spot on each cheek, and his breath came short and

with effort; but his eye was bright and fearless, and he sat the fiery chesnut like one bred to the saddle.

On we went, over rough and smooth, now floundering through a snow-bank, now dashing through such a collection of peat-bogs, moss-grown stones, and the tough, gnarled roots of furze and broom, as I should have been sorry to have traversed in cold blood; and every instant a stumble, which no care could avoid, all but brought the horses to their knees. We reached the causeway; a straight road, embanked with rough stones, and built of pine-logs and birchen fagots, with earth and pebbles rammed into the interstices—a work that dated from the reign of John Casimir. It was old and out of repair, rotten in many parts, and full of dangerous holes partly concealed by the snow, but it was a welcome exchange for the broken surface of the moor, and we sped on.

"You see that hill, doctor, due west, and beyond the pine-wood, with a white cottage on it, and some trees, and a flagstaff? That is Prussian ground!"

I did see the low swell of sandy earth,

rather a mound than a hill, and yet visible for many miles over the monotonous flat landscape. But, between us and it was a dark stretch of forest, beyond which gleamed something bright—water! There was a river to ford, then, and a wood to struggle through, but the distance was not great. Emile spoke again, after a glance to the rear.

"How those Cossack fellows are closing up! How their ponies go! Steady! they have got the range."

A shot came whizzing past us as Oginski spoke, and I started as I heard the peculiar hiss of the ball, blending with the loud and threatening hurrah of the pursuers. I looked round. They had gained on us, and were fearfully near. Two more muskets were fired, and then we plunged into the pine-wood, and galloped up a narrow path that seemed to lead towards the river. There was not room for us to advance abreast, so we hurried on in single file, stooping our heads to avoid the branches that stretched across as if to bar our way, and half blinded by the snow that we shook down upon ourselves from bough and sapling. Behind us were the Cossacks, yell-

ing like hounds closing on the prey, and firing random shots, in hopes, no doubt, of crippling our horses. We pulled up, panting and torn by bramble and branch, on the bank of the river. It was not frozen. It rolled on, deep and dark, but behind us were the howls of the Russian troopers, and we could not hesitate to plunge in.

"Head him for the spit of land yonder, doctor; the bank is too steep to——Ah! the game is up!"

A bullet from the bank mortally wounded his gallant horse. The poor creature reared and floundered, made an effort to swim on, and then rolled over and sank, snorting, beneath the cold water, which was crimsoned with his blood. The soldiers set up a shout of exultation. By great good fortune I had contrived to catch Emile by the collar as he sank, and to drag him free of the dying horse. It was an awful moment, for the current was strong, my horse was spent and frightened, and made feeble way against it, and I, encumbered as I was, could hardly keep my seat. The Cossacks set up another shout, and, while some plunged into the stream, others renewed their fire.

"Save yourself, Burton; never mind me," gasped the young Pole, still up to his neck in water; "save yourself, for they will give no quarter!"

But I retained my grasp, and in an instant more, to my great joy, the exhausted horse touched the ground, and I urged him by voice and heel up the slope, half-dragging, half-supporting, my young patient, whose strength was gone. The Prussian custom-house guard came hurrying out of their huts, and their German phlegm was surprised into something like excitement, for they gave us a faint cheer as we reached the striped flagstaff, and were safe from our enemies.

"Your passports, mein Herren? Then you are prisoners in the name of his Majesty of Prussia," said the sergeant who commanded the post, swelling with official pomposity. For a minute or two I began to fear that our dearly bought liberty was about to be rudely cut short. Emile, however, knew better than I did with whom he had to deal, and, by a judicious investment of part of the gold with which the countess had supplied me, succeeded in enlisting in our behalf the sympa-

thies of the Prussian guard, who, after all, had little love for their Russian neighbours. Accordingly, when, an hour later, the Cossacks crossed the river, and an officer of Russian police came up to demand, in the Czar's name, the extradition of the deserter, Emile Oginski, the sergeant demurred and diplomatised, asked for impossible proofs, talked of writing for instructions to head-quarters, and finally refused to give up the fugitives until his "high-and-well-born Herr Captain Inspector" should decide the point.

Two hours later, we were suffered to hire a peasant's cart, and to depart for Posen under the nominal custody of a douanier, who left us in the nearest village, wishing us a good journey in return for a brace of golden Fredericks which were slipped into his hand. With some little difficulty, which tact and bribery smoothed away, we managed to traverse Prussia, and at Hamburg we embarked for England. I have not much more to tell, except that my young companion's state of health became such as to induce his physician to order him to the south of Europe, and that at Lisbon he was joined by the Count and

Countess Oginski, as soon as the Emperor would give permission to the former to reside out of Russia. This was at length obtained, partly, I believe, in consequence of an unvarnished account of the circumstances of Emile's desertion coming to the Czar's ears. Any rate, after a year's time, it was intimated that Count Emmanuel might please himself as to his residence.

The parents of Emile were only too deeply grateful to the English doctor for the service he had rendered to their son. As I declined a considerable annuity which the count pressed on my acceptance, the countess proposed that I should reside at Miklitz, as manager of the estate and all its wealth of salt mines, with full powers and a liberal salary. This offer I gladly closed with, and I am happy to say that the value of the property has steadily augmented under my care; while Alice, whom this sudden accession of competence enabled me to claim as my wife, has long been reconciled to her home in Poland.

A LITTLE DINNER

WITH

THE CAPTAIN.

"I WISH I could paint like that!" said a voice high pitched and with a nasal drawl in it, as I sat sketching among the highlands of the Hudson.

"You take an interest in art?" said I, dabbing away at my landscape, for I saw that the man meant civilly.

"Art *and* nater!" answered the tall Yankee; "art *and* nater! You're making a pretty view of it, and so you had oughter, for 'tis an all-fired location this; yes, 'tis. I guess you're an artist?"

"Yes."

"A Britisher born?"

"Yes."

"I know'd it. Them blues and whites air

neat, and like the real thing; the clouds is not bad; but the water's the thing that shows gumption."

"You should be a judge of your own element," I answered, laughing, for I had already settled my friend's calling, on a second glance at his cornelian waistcoat buttons and his coral breast-pin. "You have sailed over a good deal of blue water in your time."

"Scalp me, stranger," said he, "but you're right. We must be better acquainted, *we* must. I haven't a card, stranger, but my name's Daniel Coffin, of Providence, Mass., first mate of the Bird of Freedom, clipper ship, lying down at New York." And he held out his strong sunburnt hand for me to shake.

Some more conversation followed. I found my new friend, like most of his countrymen, very inquisitive, though the questions he asked were propounded with an apparent simplicity that made them by no means offensive. It was not enough for him to know my name and profession. He was curious about my antecedents, my travels, my habits, my prospects, and the friends I had in America. "Tell you what, sir," said he at last, "you

kiender took me in, first I spied you out. Something of the soger officer about that individual, says I to myself; something square about the carrying of the shoulders and head, that a man who's knocked about the world as I have, can't mistake. Mebbe, thinks I, 'tis an engineer officer from West Point, making tactical sketches. Have you done a little in that line, sir, afore you took to the brush?"

I owned that I had worn the Queen's colours, and had sold out, after some years in Sydney and Auckland, to escape the weariness of colonial quarters, and the tardiness of promotion.

The first mate of the Bird of Freedom asked no more questions. He began extolling beyond measure the good qualities of his skipper, Captain Malachi Hodgson. The "cap'en" was a scholar, the "cap'en" was a gentleman fit to pick mutton-chops at Windsor, the "cap'en" could speak all languages, and had been over the Italian picture-galleries and museums, and was an antiquary, and a collector, and what not. Nothing came amiss to this extraordinary captain; he had autographs of all the great or notorious of the

earth, gems, coins, medals, statuettes. Then, the personal accomplishments of the commander were equal to his possessions: he could sing and play, and sketch, and model in wax and clay, and take photographs, and lecture on chemistry. Now, would I come and see the Bird of Freedom when I came back to New York?

I faithfully promised that when I returned to the city I would call on Daniel Coffin. And we parted, excellently well pleased with each other.

Three weeks passed before, quitting the old Dutch farm-house where I had boarded, I went back to the Empire City. There, as I was one day skimming the Herald, in a café, my eye fell on the following advertisement:— "CALIFORNIA DIRECT. The splendid clipper ship, Bird of Freedom. To sail on the 17th. For freight or passage, apply, &c." The advertisement recalled my enthusiastic friend, Mr. Coffin, and the Admirable Crichton of a skipper whose praises he had so loyally sounded, and I resolved to be as good as my word, and to pay him a call. I found that the ship had dropped down, and was lying off

Long Island. Hiring a pleasure pinnace, I made the short voyage to her anchoring-ground, and found reason to admit that the mate's eulogy had not been much overstrained. The Bird of Freedom was a magnificent vessel, nearly new, and of immense tonnage. She was one of those long, sharp-bowed, lofty-masted craft of which Americans are so proud, and appeared, as indeed she was, admirably designed for speed. I could not help fancying, however, that her build was better adapted for summer seas and the trade winds, for quick runs, in fact, under favourable circumstances, than for buffeting to and fro in rough variable weather. "A raal darlint, your honour," cried my tough old Irish boatman, who had not in twenty years dropped a note of his brogue; "she lies on the say like a duck, and is as nate as if she'd a glass shade over her." By this time we were alongside, and a rough head, crowned by a Spanish straw hat, was popped over the bulwarks, while a harsh voice swore at us, and asked what we wanted, that we scraped our boat's snout against their keelson? I answered from the stern-sheets, taking off my

hat, "We were merely admiring your fine vessel, but may I ask whether you have on board a gentleman who invited me to pay you a visit, I mean Mr. Daniel Coffin?"

The second mate, who was our questioner, acknowledged my salute by sulkily lifting his own Panama, and replied, "Yes, I kalkilate he air. Did you wish to come on board. Yon'll find a clean side rope at the starboard gang. The larboard one's tarry, and would spile them gloves o' yourn."

The boat was directly at the foot of the starboard side-ladder, and I jumped on board, just in time to meet honest Daniel Coffin, who came bustling aft to welcome me.

And, sure enough, Daniel Coffin did appear glad to see me. His mahogany face was as radiant as such a face could be, and the grip he gave my hand was like the pressure of a vice. He did the honours of the ship, at least of all above decks, making me duly admire the tapering of the masts, the squareness of the yards, the trim neatness which regulated everything. There was no visible morsel of metal, whether ringbolt, pin, rail, or brass gun, that was not scoured as brightly

as the kettles in a Dutch kitchen. There was an unusual quantity of rackwork and windlass tackle about, as well as pulleys, patent blocks, and other mechanism for economising labour. As for the crew, I saw three or four fine-looking seamen on the forecastle, busy with serving mallets, spunyarn, rattlins, and inch and a half rope, preparing something or other for the ship's top hamper, and a couple of wobegone persons were wringing swabs near them, which latter alone took some notice of us. One of these men touched his hat, not to the mate, but to me, and seemed disposed to speak, but Mr. Coffin swore at him, and bade him "keep his distance," and he shuffled off in a broken-spirited fashion.

"Those are not sailors?" said I, with a jerk of my thumb to point out the object of my query.

"No; they air not. They're what they call 'waisters' in the navy; but here we jest call 'em landlubbers;" answered Mr. Coffin. "Never mind 'em. I wish I could show you the cabins, but cap'en's busy writing. They're splendacious, and that air a fact. Ah! here is cap'en himself."

And, sure enough, up the cabin stair came the commander, and the mate bustling to introduce me, we exchanged bows and compliments. The skipper was a little man, not puny, but a giant cut down, with broad shoulders and "double joints," He had a massive jaw, full of great white teeth, bright chesnut hair, blue eyes, and a very red and white complexion. Altogether he was as little like an American as any man I ever saw in any country. But he was very well bred and polished, quite a gentleman in manner, and I soon found that I was talking to one who was at least my equal in education, and a man of talent to boot. He showed me the cabins, gave me a peep at two or three cabinets of medallions, cameos, rare shells, and so forth, as well as at some valuable pictures and curious arms, and only regretted that he was too much occupied on that day to submit to my inspection all his treasures. Would I come and dine with him before he sailed? Meanwhile I must have some lunch, and he tinkled a little silver handbell, which brought in the coloured steward and a tray. During lunch, we chatted on indifferent subjects; the

captain pleasing me greatly by the frank shrewdness of his talk. Presently feats of strength were mentioned. There were some very heavy round-shot in the steerage, the captain said he could hardly lift them, and he wondered whether I could make a better job of it than he. So, after lunch, we went into the steerage, and there, by a great effort, I contrived to heave up one of the shot to the level of my head, to the great amusement and satisfaction of my entertainer.

"Well, sir," said he, "you have done what only six of us here aboard can manage. Myself —that is—Dan Coffin, who is strong, for all that he looks so loosely put together, and four of our primest forecastle salts. I wish you were one of us. But the next best thing will be to get the advantage of your company while we can; so excuse a sailor's rough invitation, and come and dine with me aboard on Thursday, the 16th. We are advertised to sail on Friday, and the passengers come on board early on that day; but on Thursday we can have a cozy evening, and you shall look over my hoards of old rubbish. May I expect you?"

I said "Yes, I would be sure to come," and thanked him for his hospitality. We shook hands. I stepped into my boat, and went off, and the last things I saw on the deck of the clipper were the heads of Captain Hodgson and his mate Coffin, as they waved their hands in a parting salute.

No obstacle having intervened, on Thursday afternoon I found myself a guest at the captain's hospitable board, in his pretty cabin, with its trophies of weapons and its choice little Flemish pictures hanging on the walls. There was rather an ostentatious display of plate and glass, and fruit and flowers, considering that covers were laid for only four, Captain Malachi Hodgson, his first officer, Mr. Dan Coffin, Dr. Ellerman, the ship's surgeon, and myself. The dinner proved a capital one, the champagne—the royal Madeira—were worthy of the dinner, and the conversation pleasant, for both the captain and the doctor were well-informed rattles. Captain Hodgson was very gay and amusing. As for the surgeon, he was a dry, caustic talker, with a good deal of ironical humour, and a talent for quotation. In person he was a

large bony man, with inscrutable eyes like those of an elephant. We did not spare the wine, but were all perfectly sober when we rose from table, and proceeded to sip our coffee and smoke our cigars, when I soon afterwards proposed to take my leave. The skipper would not hear of it. Indeed, as he reminded me, I had no shore boat in attendance, having been pulled from the quay in the ship's yawl, which, with Nathan the second mate in it, had been fortunately lying off the jetty just as I came down to the water. I must trust to my entertainer's good offices for the means of departure, and the captain promised me his gig at eleven oclock. "Not a minute before," said he, gaily, "for till then you are my prisoner." Then I remember that the captain played a tune on the piano, very nicely indeed, and the doctor sang a sentimental Spanish air to the guitar, with an absurd gravity that set us all laughing. Then we played cards for low stakes, and I won a few dollars. Next, a bowl of punch was proposed, and the doctor was enjoined to brew it. "A famous punch-maker the doctor is," said the captain. The black steward brought

in the materials, and the surgeon began his task in an elaborate manner. Then the captain jumped up, and proposed to show me his coins and other treasures while the punch-making went on. As I lifted my eyes from a tray of very curious Etruscan relics, I happened to glance at the mirror opposite, and there, to my wonder, methought I saw the doctor shaking a white powder into his brew from a paper he held in his hand. The captain's eyes followed mine, and saw the reflexion in the glass as well. He saw, too, my slight start. "*Powdered* sugar, hey, doctor?" said he. "Yes, to be sure," answered the man of healing. "I always use lump, myself," remarked the captain; "but that may be an old fashioned prejudice. The result is undeniable, anyhow. Have you seen these seals, sir? I bought them in Athens." Powdered sugar! to be sure it was powdered sugar, and I was an ass to be suspecting Borgian sleights of hand in the nineteenth century. But now we were asked to taste of the punch. It was hot, fragrant, and very tempting. The doctor flourished the ladle. We all sat down, and held out our glasses,

which were filled. "Now, gentlemen, a toast," cried the doctor; "The fatherland of our accomplished visitor, Old England, and good luck to her!" We all lifted our glasses. I as a good patriot drained mine; and almost as I did so, noticed that the others held full glasses to their lips, but only made a feint of sipping. I caught the captain's eyes fixed on me with a peculiar glance of triumph and mockery. The doctor's face, too, had a sneer on it, and the mate was chuckling audibly. Meanwhile I reeled in my chair, the glass quivered in my hand, there was a humming in my brain as if of a million bees, and the room was revolving like a top. I was giddy, sick, blind, and a laugh rang in my ears as I became insensible.

A dreadful roaring made me dream that I was in a den of lions; next, that I was in the midst of an earthquake; and lastly, to awake to a dull sense that steam was being blown off somewhere, but where or how, even when awake, I could not conjecture. I had afterwards no doubt that the steam-tug was then alongside. There were all sorts of dull, confused noises, but none that I understood.

There were foul smells, too. Something crawled over my face. Another something, also with legs and antennæ, was rustling at my ear; that was a cockroach, and I swept it aside with disgust, but the drug still overcame me, and I fell asleep again. From this second slumber I was rudely awakened by a shower of merciless kicks in the ribs, against which not even morphia could make a sleeper proof. My eyes opened with a jerk, and in the dim light I could faintly discern the ill-looking face of Nathan, second mate of the clipper, who was swearing as hard as he kicked.

"Get up, ye skunk, and show your carcase on deck."

"On deck!" said I, in a bewildered way. "Why should I? Where am I? Leave off, I say; you hurt me."

"I'll jest break your bones, ef ye don't obey orders," answered Nathan, tartly. "Cap'en says hands are to be mustered to sign articles afore sailing, and I've been told to rouse up the skulkers; so up with you."

Indignation was but a tenth part of what

I felt. I made a lurching effort to rise, and tried to catch Nathan by the throat, but was too weak, and only got a grasp of the monkey-jacket, from which he had now changed his shore-going coat. Nathan laughed grimly as he caught me by the arm.

"We'll larn ye," he said, "to respect an officer, afore you've seen your last of blue water. But I must git ye to quarters. Halloa! Jonadab and Titus, ketch hold of the British skulker here, and help him to tumble up."

Two brawny natives of Cape Cod came jumping down a ladder, and, before I could remonstrate, I was hustled up some steps, through a hatchway, and finally found myself at the foot of the mainmast, in broad day, and surrounded by a crowd of men in all varieties of shabby dress. The Bird of Freedom was in open water, standing out to sea. There was "a sea on," and the vessel was rolling and pitching quite enough to account for the absence of any passengers from deck, and enough, too, to make it difficult for those recruits who had not their sea legs to keep their feet.

Presently I saw advancing from the after-deck the treacherous skipper, Captain Malachi Hodgson, accompanied by his three mates, his supercargo, the surgeon, the carpenter, the cooper, and a gruff man who officiated as boatswain, the large crew requiring such an official. Captain Hodgson was in his sea-going clothes, a shabby old suit that had already borne the souse of much salt water. He had a broad belt round his waist, in which was stuck a six-shot Colt's revolver, whilst a brass-hilted hanger swung at his left side. Each of the mates, too, as well as the boatswain, cooper, carpenter, &c., had a revolver and cutlass ostentatiously displayed. The captain's eye ranged along our ranks, calculating and keen. I had thought that he would wince when our glances met, and I dare say I looked stern enough in my just indignation, but I mistook him. His eye met mine quite coldly and unconcernedly, and all he deigned to say was:

"The forecastle hands will be picked from the strongest, of course, Mr. Coffin. Put that man along with them."

And as his forefinger pointed me out,

Jonadab and Titus whisked me a little on one side, where several quiet large-limbed mariners were standing and chewing their quids. "That man!" It was thus he designated one who but yesterday had been his flattered guest. I choked with wrath, and when I did find my tongue, my voice was so peremptory and loud, that Jonadab and Titus let go my arms in sheer surprise.

"Before Heaven, sir, you shall repent this outrage, if there be law in America. You shall——"

"Hold your tongue, sir!" bawled the captain. "Do you think, under my own flag, on my own deck, I'll submit to the impertinence of a whelp like you. I'll teach you your duty, unless you prefer Old Nick for a schoolmaster."

And then followed a volley of oaths.

"If we fall in with a cruiser, British or American, I give you my word——" I began, but I was cut short.

"Gag the hound, Mr. Coffin," said the skipper; "stop that tongue of his, or cut it out at once."

Gagged I was, accordingly, in spite of

my feeble resistance, but even had not my brain been humming with the effects of the drug, I could not have shaken off the united strength of my three or four brawny tormentors with the biblical names. Thus roughly reduced to silence, I was lashed to a shroud and left to be a passive spectator of the scene. The captain then ran his eye over the shrinking mass of landsmen, and I could see that his violence had produced its effect, and that they were cowed into servility. "Bring forward those articles, and the writing-desk," was the next order. "Now, men," said the skipper—but his oaths I leave unrepeated—"you have shipped, as you are aware, for California direct, on board this screamer of the seas, Bird of Freedom. Hush! no interruptions allowed; I don't ask you how you all came on board, and I don't care. I make no distinction. Here you are, and here you stop. I don't ask you to ship for the return voyage, because I know for certain that I couldn't keep a scamp out of the lot, once we drop anchor at San Francisco. But for the voyage out, I've got you, and I'll keep you. Mutiny shall be punished. Skulkers and shammers shall get their deserts.

Provisions you'll find good, the biscuit won't hurt your teeth, nor the salt meat neither; there's lemon juice, there's a doctor, there's no stint of cocoa and tea, and Uncle Sam's full allowance of grog," (here there was a feeble cheer, set up by some sycophants in ragged garments). "As for wages, we won't quarrel. Twelve dollars for A.B.'s, eight for landsmen, four for boys. Supercargo and steward will find you in Jerseys, frocks, and shirts, if your kits are not in order. Now, each man will step forward, answer to his name, and sign the register."

Daniel Coffin unfolded the paper, as his superior's oration closed, and called the first man's name, "Kit Marsh!" "Here!" replied a brisk little English sailor, whose red eyes and sallow face told tales of the debauch at a tavern ashore, which had thrown him helpless as a sack into the hands of the crimps and the captain. But Kit cared little. It was only that he had spent his money like a fool, and must now go to sea months earlier than he intended. The kidnapping appeared to him in no very dreadful light, and he was always at home in a forecastle. So Kit Marsh

signed articles with his shaky hand, remarking that he was but ten days back from China, and had not a cent left. The others followed suit, and name after name was appended to the register. Some of the men tried to remonstrate; one went down on his knees to beg to be put ashore; he was an emigrant house-painter, a Swiss, and had a wife and child in New York, who must starve in his absence. But the oak planks he knelt on, were not harder than the heart of Captain Hodgson, and the suppliant was bidden to "leave off snivelling, and go for'ard." Of course I do not for a moment mean that every one there, was an unwilling recruit. Far from it. There were several New Englanders, hard of head and hand, who had a small venture in the ship, and were treated considerately by the skipper and mates. There were also certain seamen, English, Scottish, or Dutch, who had been coaxed into shipping when intoxicated, and who had merely been wheedled out of their liberty. But hardly one of the landsmen was there of his own free will. They had been beguiled on all sorts of pretexts; had been drugged, cajoled, and

intimidated; in fact, had been enlisted very much as French recruits were in the days of Louis the Fifteenth, and before France had a conscription. For seamen were terribly scarce in New York, and were chiefly manned by crimped foreigners; the natives being unwilling to ship, except in whalers or coasters, where they could have a share in the venture.

The poor house-painter had been victimised in a cruel way. He had been tempted on board to do some job in the way of his trade, but scarcely had he fallen to work, before he was unceremoniously forced into the hold, and there detained under hatches till the ship sailed. He told me this story with many tears; tears of no selfish sorrow, for his heart, poor fellow, was with the helpless creatures he had left in a garret at New York, and he was in a most distressing agony of mind when he recalled the privations and sufferings which in all likelihood awaited them.

When all but myself had signed, a pen was placed between my fingers, Nathan held my wrist, Mr. Coffin guided my hand, and between them they managed to affix a spluttering signature to the important document. Then

we were all sent forward; libations of grog were served out, petty officers appointed, and the mates came up to teach us our duty. "You air in my watch," said Mr. Dan Coffin, as he very deftly removed the gag, and undid the cord that confined my wrists; "you air in my watch, and kinder under my care. Keep your mouth shut, now ef you don't want to bite oakum again. I am speaking out of pure kindness, and for your good; for I don't mind saying I have taken a sort of fancy to you, mister, and we're old acquaintances. Don't bear malice, stranger, for I mean no harm, and I wish you no worse than jest to go quietly through the voyage, aud keep a whole skin and sound bones. For that, mister, you must keep a civil tongue, and be less bumptious to cap'en. He's terrible, cap'en is, once he takes a spite, and already you've roused his grit. I see by your eye you're riled, but jest you consider this; 'tis better to go ashore at San Francisco, alive, than mebbe to be food for the fishes, atween this and the Gulf. I'm hard, myself, but not like cap'en. I'm hickory, but he's flint."

For all my righteous rage, for all my natural repugnance to submit to so unjustifiable an outrage, I felt that Dan Coffin gave good advice. I also felt sure that he spoke truth; he *had* taken a "sort of fancy' to me, although he had been the original decoy-duck concerned in my capture. I had heard queer stories and read strange paragraphs, respecting the doings on board American vessels, even while in British waters. What then was to bridle the imperious will of Captain Hodgson, on the long voyage that was just begun: a voyage round the great western continent, from lax New York to lawless San Francisco? Entrapped as I had been, it was still necessary that I should obey and toil, until a chance of escape should present itself. I consented to work as a foremast man. The actual labour was the least part of what I had to undergo, for I was vigorous enough to get through my "duty" with comparative ease.

The voyages I had previously made, had seasoned me against sea-sickness, and I could tread the deck with tolerable firmness; whereas many of the kidnapped men were in agonies of nausea, and slipped and tumbled as they went

about their work. But the cockroaches and vermin in the forecastle, the foul air, the noise, the broken slumbers, the grease, dirt, and squalor, and the many disgusts of such a life! Nor was it agreeable to be the only educated man among companions who often jeered at me for not drinking rum and chewing tobacco like the rest—for being so "mealy-mouthed" when oaths were in question—and the like. But here, too, my robust constitution stood me in good stead, for nobody ventured on practical jokes or personal rudeness, whereas a more slightly made man would probably have had to endure a good deal of annoyance. Of my enforced messmates the majority were rather well-disposed fellows, although ignorant and fond of drink, and as impressionable as schoolboys. Half a dozen of them were sad ruffians, quarrelsome evil-eyed scamps, who were the bullies of the forecastle, and whose ordinary talk was full of blasphemy and threats. Among these, I have heard proposals for a mutiny broached twenty times, but nothing ever came of them. When once the ship's officers came hectoring in among the crew, to distribute their daily dole of cuffs and curses,

the ruffians were always utterly cowed, and would bear any amount of beating.

But while it was needful to keep a tight hand on this portion of the ship's company, nothing could excuse the capricious severity of those in authority. Captain, mates, and boatswain, were never without revolvers, and seldom without a cutlass or hanger, which latter they would fetch and buckle on at the slightest murmur or remonstrance from the sailors. The boatswain always carried a thick rattan, and was unsparing in its use; the mates had knotted ropes-ends, or "colts," in their pockets, and mercilessly applied them to every laggard. But what the crew most feared, was the free use of the "brass knuckles," or "knuckle dusters," which our taskmasters wore six times out of seven. These are brass finger-guards, not unlike what the Roman gladiators called the cestus; they constitute a regular portion of the equipment of an officer of the American mercantile marine, and they convert the fist into a metal mace for cutting and gashing the face which it strikes. The punishment was unsparing and continual. The crew was an incongruous one,

with its incapables, its skulkers, and its sick men—real and feigned. Picked up as it had been, it was certainly a very indifferent ship's company, and would have tried the patience of even a good-humoured commander. But in our case pity and patience were put out of court at once. Sick or well, lazy or willing, stupid or shrewd, every man must work, and every man must obey any order, smartly and well, or bear the penalty. And the weather was exactly that least suited to a display of the clipper's qualities. Baffling winds, rough seas, and adverse currents, made the Bird of Freedom beat about in a most unsatisfactory style, and soured the temper of skipper and subalterns. If there came a fine sunny day, with favouring wind and moderate sea, the passengers would appear on the poop, basking like butterflies; but soon the cloudy sky and increasing sea sent them all out of sight again. It was curious on these occasions for me to look from my post forward at the gay groups in silk and broadcloth, and the fluttering muslins, with spy-glasses and parasols, and books, to hear the silvery peals of ladies' laughter, and the voices of educated men, from

whose society I was shut out. And it was curious to see the captain a prime favourite among them, amusing, courteous, and kind, and then to see how the same captain came among us, swearing, black-browed and cruel as Nero.

Four men died, before we were off Cape Hatteras, every one of whom might have lived but for the brutal usage and neglect on board. The surgeon only attended to the passengers. He declared the sick seamen were shamming; they were driven to quarters, and buffeted while they could stand. They died like dogs, and had dogs' burial. A worn out hammock, a round shot sewn up in it, a grating tilted over the gangway, and a sullen plunge in the sea, without prayer or blessing—and they were gone. By this time, many others had received severe injuries, few or none were without cuts and bruises, for the mates thought nothing of felling a seaman with their brass knuckle-dusters, every blow of which broke the skin. As little did they think of a knock-down blow with a marlinspike or belaying-pin, and the canes and knotted colts were always in full play. I cannot say that the more deadly

weapons were much used. I have certainly seen the captain give a flesh wound with his hanger to a sluggish sailor, and two of the men were pistolled by the first mate for disobedience, but the wounds were slight, and the shots had been designedly aimed at the calf of the leg. But I could have no doubt that on very slender provocation the shooting and hacking would have been resorted to freely. Yet many of the men were content and cheerful. The provisions were excellent, and liberally furnished; check shirts and sea frocks were supplied freely against wages; and the grog was good. It was only when fresh from punishment that the more thoughtless were out of spirits.

But there were those to whom the discipline was unbearable, and the captain as much an object of dread as if he had been really a demon. The mates were harsh enough, but the captain was a worse tyrant still. He bore heavily on the weak, and most of all on the poor young Swiss, the kidnapped house-painter. He was a well-disposed fellow, rather puny and timid, and never quite free from the qualms of sea-sickness. He had

been an excellent workman ashore, but never would have made a sailor. I protected him from the forecastle bullies, and spoke in his favour to Dan Coffin, but Nathan and the captain were very severe with him. Poor wretch! what he went through, will hardly bear detailing—the oppression, the injustice, the sickening brutality. I shall never forget how he crept to my side one night as we kept watch on deck, and whispered to me that he had seen his wife and child in a dream, nights before, dead of want, and that in another dream he had seen them free from pain and trouble, happy in Heaven, beckoning and smiling to him to join them. "I shall be with them soon," he said wildly; "I can no longer bear the life on board this ship, this hell upon the waters." I looked down at his white face in the moonlight, scarred with ill-usage as it was, and saw a new resolve there. I tried to comfort him, to put hope into him, and enable him to struggle on. He pressed my hand and thanked me, and glided off like a ghost. That night he drowned himself, springing over the side during the bustle of relieving

the watch. "The thief! He has cheated me, has he?" was all the captain said about it.

We were in the tropics then, and the winds were light, and the clipper went like a wraith over the waters. She was a wonderful sailor. The men were now less maltreated than in rough weather. Nevertheless, seven had died before we had crossed the line.

We were not much south of the line when an accident occurred. The great iron tank, a patent one, proved defective, and the water ran out, floating the cargo, and mixing itself with the bilge-water of the hold. Only the casks remained. We sailors were restricted to a quart a day, then to a pint, and that in the tropics. But the torture of thirst conquered even fear; we spoke out loudly, in spite of steel and pistols, and we got our way. The captain was obliged to put into the harbour of Rio Janeiro to obtain a fresh supply. He was very unwilling. He would let no one go ashore, except the American seamen whom he trusted, lest he should lose his white slaves. Those Americans I speak of, were not ill treated; they were on a

different footing from that of the crimped men.

With great trouble I succeeded in writing a letter, and bribing, with the few dollars I had about me, a black canoe-man who sold fruit and yams, to carry it secretly ashore. This letter I addressed to the British Consul, my schoolfellow in former days, and on whom I felt I could depend. Nor was I disappointed. Before the water was all shipped, the Bird of Freedom was boarded by the gentleman in question, who had wisely procured the attendance of a lieutenant and boat's crew from the United States frigate in harbour. The consul civilly but firmly claimed me as a British subject, under illegal restraint, and the American officer backed the claim.

I never shall forget the face of our "old man," as the sailors called Captain Hodgson, as he stood biting his lips and looking from the consul to me. The whole thing had been managed so suddenly that he was for once, outwitted. "Take your Britisher!" he said at last; and as I passed over the side to the consul's boat he eyed me with the

malignity of a fiend. But over me, at least, his power no longer extended, though my heart ached for the poor fellows I had left, as I next day saw the Bird of Freedom unfold her white wings and glide away out of the port, and out of my life, over the blue sea.

A DAY AT GRAND GULF.

THE long vacation served for an excuse; but, indeed, I might have given myself a holiday, even during the busiest portion of the legal year, without detriment to my professional prospects. I was not precisely a briefless barrister, having made exactly nineteen guineas and a half (the half-guinea being due to a "motion of course") during the past twelvemonth. But I did not depend on the patronage of attorneys for my bread; my great-aunt's legacy gave me a modest independence, and I felt an anxious wish to visit America and see my brother once more. There were but two of us left out of a rather large family. I had been bred to the bar, at home, but William had chosen to push his

fortunes in the New World. He had hitherto chased the fickle goddess so hotly, that the letters of his relatives rarely reached him, and that his were seldom dated twice over from the same town, or even from the same state. He had adopted the restless habits of the most migratory Yankee, whisking from Florida to Maine, speculating, mining, prospecting, land-jobbing, entering professions to abandon them half tried, and leading that Jack-of-all-trades life so dear to our Transatlantic cousins. Yet Willy made money: he never complained, never asked assistance from his few surviving kinsfolk, and his elastic spirit swam like a cork in all waters of difficulty. When last I heard of him he was junior partner in a new bank at New Orleans; he had done well enough, and gave me a pressing invitation to visit him in the healthy season. He was housed in Rochambeau-street, and could introduce me, he said, to all the celebrities of a city compared with which even Paris is tame and common-place. Autumn came, and I went. I had written twice since I had made up my mind to the voyage, but had received no reply. This, however,

disturbed me little. I made no doubt that I should find my brother in the bank parlour, safely anchored before his ledgers and cash-books. "Banking," said I to myself, "is a steady and permanent pursuit, and I am glad that Willy has taken to so sober a mode of realising a fortune. This is very different from his Californian land-jobbing, or his Texan mule trade, or his Oregon life assurance company. He will do well now, and I shall find him at his post." I set off. I travelled by rail and steam, without the slightest adventure, to a certain well-known port on the Mississippi, where I embarked. The river-boat I selected was a fine one, the Benjamin Franklin; she had been launched but a month before, and her superb cabins retained their maiden splendour of decoration. What pretty cabins they were, lavishly adorned with mirrors, alabaster statues, costly woods, gilding, and rich carpets and curtains, a world too fine for the rough majority of the company. There were some well-bred, quiet people on board, certainly, but they formed a small minority, and seemed to shrink from notice. The bulk of the passengers were excessively

wild and noisy, with beards and hair tangled and luxuriant, and dressed in garments of incongruous fashion, half dandy, half backwoodsman.

"Surely, steward," I ventured to say, "these cannot be all Southern planters. Are they filibusters, or——"

"No, no, massa," grinned the black, very affably; "dem not Southern gentlemen, sure, nor yet Yankee notionsellers, nouther. Massa must have heard ob de great diggins at Pike's Peak, hey?"

"Pike's Peak!" repeated I, rallying my wandering recollections.

"Iss, sir, up 'mong de ole Rocky Mountains. Dere dem passengers are all going off as fast as can hurry. Pike's Peak shocking savage place, massa, not fit for Chris'en—oh dear no!"

I *had* heard of Pike's Peak, the reports of its immense wealth, varied by hideous tales of starvation, suffering, death, and cannibalism, among the emigrants thither.

"But those gentlemen," said I, glancing towards a group of well-dressed, well-behaved men, "can hardly be going to Pike's Peak?"

"Which, massa?" said the affable negro. "Ah! I see; dem wid de lily-white hands and de smart cravat round him throat, and de shirt-cuff so clean and stiff, and all de bootiful rings and watch-guards. Certainly not, sir; dem never go grubbing wid pick and cradle. Dey too clebber, sure."

"Those, then, are planters?" said I, with some interest.

"Cornelius, ye darned snowball, get me a julep!" bawled a fierce adventurer from among the diggers.

"Coming, sir!" answered the steward, swishing his napkin, and then answered my query with, "He! he! he! Massa make comical mistake. Dem are *sportsmen.*"

"But how—why?" I began, when the impatient digger assured the black that he would "draw a bead on his ugly carcase" with his revolver, unless the desired refreshment were instantly produced. Nor did Cornelius seem to regard this threat as a mere flower of speech, for he hurried off, muttering between his teeth, but outwardly obedient.

I was left alone. Not for long, however. One of the gentlemen who had attracted my

observation, very civilly came forward and invited me, as a stranger and an Englishman, to take a seat at their table.

"We may be able," said the American, "to afford you some reliable information respecting the productions and noteworthy points of the country we are skirting, and I need scarcely say that to assist a traveller in forming a correct estimate of the South will be a pleasant task to us all."

Very civil this. I willingly complied, and met with a genial welcome. Two of the party were fine-looking men, of an appearance eminently prepossessing, and seemed to combine keen intelligence with the bland suavity of citizens of the world. The others were much younger, and had rather a haggard aspect, but their dress was faultless—at least, from an American point of view—and their display of jewellery, and spotless linen was equal to that of their elder companions. "Well!" thought I, "if all American sportsmen are as elegant in dress and deportment, it is plain that, in the New World at least, out-door amusements have a tendency to refine instead of brutalise." And I thought with a con-

temptuous pity of British fox-hunters, and still more of British turfites, as I surveyed these dandy Nimrods of the West. Still, I am bound to say that not one word of sport did I hear. On the contrary, my new friends conversed on politics, commerce, the cotton crop, the snags and sawyers of the river, the last revival, the last explosion, and the difference between New York and London.

"You seem to know New Orleans well, gentlemen," said I, after listening to two or three anecdotes, the scene of which was invariably laid in the metropolis of the Western Delta.

"No place like it!" cried one of the younger men, with a sort of enthusiasm; "it's right down, thorough going, and slick through, the cream of all creation. Life goes faster there than in other places."

"So I have heard," said I, with a smile, but rather diffidently; "life, I understand, goes a good deal more abruptly than is pleasant. In duels I mean," added I, seeing that I was not understood.

"Sir," said another of the party, "you have been misinformed. Not that I insinuate that

our free citizens will tamely brook affront. No, sir! But there is great exaggeration prevalent on the score of duels and fatal affrays, pretended to be of continual occurrence down South. We have chivalry, sir, we have fire, but we air not the monsters we air depicted."

I told him I had always understood that the state of Mississippi in especial was renowned for its lawless condition, and for the slight value set on human life by its inhabitants. The four gentlemen shook their heads with one accord.

"These air slanders," said one of the seniors of the party, whose name I understood to be Alphonso P. C. Jones—"these air slanders, I give you my sacred word of honour. We live, it is true, in a land where the blushing bloom of Eden has not yet wholly faded away; in a land where the luxuriant beauty of airth sometimes attracts the spoiler and the rowdy, and occasional difficulties will happen. But peace is our idol, and the olive-branch——"

Here some confusion was caused to the orator by the trifling circumstance of his

bowie-knife tumbling from its concealment somewhere in the roll-collar of his waistcoat, and coming with a bang on the mahogany table. He turned very red, and was shuffling the unwelcome implement away, when I stretched out my hand, saying, "Would you allow me to look at it? I have often wished to inspect a bowie-knife."

Mr. Alphonso P. C. Jones solemnly handed over the weapon in its shagreen sheath, and I looked with great interest at the sharp and heavy blade, the strong cross-bar to increase the purchase in close conflict, and the silver mountings of haft and scabbard. Meanwhile, Mr. Jones muttered something about the necessity of self-preservation, and the number of Irish and Germans about.

"You must often have found this sort of thing useful in your mode of life," said I, poising the heavy dagger as I gave it back.

"What way of life? What might you mean?"

Such were the questions rather fiercely propounded, and every brow was overcast. But I had spoken in perfect innocence; and when I went on to talk about buffalo-chases and

bear-hunts, and the rough forest sports of America, the frowns relaxed, and my new acquaintances gave me a good deal of surprising information on the subject of woodcraft. Suddenly my eye lit upon a remarkable object. This was no other than the face of Cornelius, the black steward, now expressing, with its rolling eyes and open mouth, as much astonishment as the face of a negro can convey. He was gaping and glaring, first at me, and then at my companions, quite oblivious of the tray and napkin he carried. I jumped up:

"What on earth is the matter, steward?" said I.

The black drew me aside: "Me tell massa no lie! When Britisher ask if me sabe who gentlemen wid lily-white hands and plenty gold rings—me say, sportsmen. Den Cornelius come back, and find massa sit down along wid dem, as tick as tieves."

"And why not?" asked I, in bewilderment. "What possible objection could I have to their company? Or, indeed, what better company could I expect to meet with than those gentlemen, who, by your own account—"

"Curm hyar, you black-faced chatterbox!" thundered a voice from the pantry, the voice of the captain himself. "How's dinner to be true to time, if you stand preachin' there? Free nigger or not, I'll cowhide you."

Off flew Cornelius, and I returned to my seat, puzzled, but pleased with my new friends. A few more spirit-stirring tales of the prairie and the forest, and then a game of cards was proposed, and a couple of packs seemed to appear, as if by magic, on the table. But Alphonso P. C. Jones would not play, nor would he agree to any game, excepting for merely nominal stakes, quarter-dollar points, or the like. I have never felt any taste for gambling, but I play a steady rubber at home, and I had no objection to make a fourth in a quiet way, the stakes being so small, and the other gentlemen being so disappointed at Jones's firm refusal. But scarcely had the second deal taken place before Captain Pell himself appeared, and marched with a stern countenance straight up to our table, on which he placed his clenched hand.

"Very sorry, gentlemen," said he, "but,

as commander of this vessel, I am obligationed to say, shut up!"

Mr. Jones remonstrated in a mild but dignified manner. "Surely, captain, we are as harmlessly employed as the chess-players yonder, or as those enthusiasts who make such a tarnation clatter with the dominoes. I was not aware that your rules——"

"Then, sir, you had oughter! 'Tis printed up yonder in black and white, plain to read as a chyild's horn-book. Cyards air prohibited aboard any of our owner's bits o' hollow timber. So, I say, gentlemen, shut up, or go ashore!"

There was no more card-playing, but I could not help sympathising with my new acquaintances in their suppressed indignation at this arbitrary interference with our recreations.

We were running fast down stream, and the brown levees, or artificial embankments, of the Mississippi shore were visible on the left bank, while above them nodded the green crests of tall trees, not yet laid low by the woodman's axe.

"If you will do us the favour," said Al-

phonso P. C. Jones, after a little whispering conversation with his three friends, "to become our guest for a few days, it will please us much, and honour us excessively. We disembark at Grand Gulf, where the boat will stop some three hours hence, and where my residence is located. We can offer you but bachelor accommodation, sir, combined with duck-shooting, but if you air not too proud——"

What could I do but accept so frank and well-meant an invitation? It was settled that I should for a short time become the guest of my fellow-travellers. And now the metallic summons to dinner was heard, and then succeeded the usual crushing, elbowing, and pushing for places. I was swept away by the crowd, and found myself seated at the table at a considerable distance from my new friends. On my left was a rosy clerical gentleman, an episcopal bishop, I believe; and on my right sat a rather prepossessing lady of literary tastes, Mrs. Governor Gunn. Mrs. Governor Gunn had a husband somewhere about the ship; a small grey-haired gentleman with excessively sore eyes, and who

had been governor of some outlying state—Wisconsin, Florida, or Missouri—but had retired on account of bad health. The consort of this puny dignitary was certainly the principal personage on board, the queen of fashion and arbitress of taste, and she had been pleased to converse with me in a gracious and regal manner during the early part of the voyage. Now, however, the springs of Mrs. Governor Gunn's affability were frozen. She answered my remarks with icy monosyllables, frowned at me, rustled her ribbons at me, and gave me the cold shoulder. I was at a loss to know how I had given offence, but when I attributed this hostile behaviour to feminine caprice, and turned to the bishop, the bishop was just as bad. He became redder of visage and huskier of speech, lost his bland smile, and was no longer interested in my comments on the voluntary principle, or desirous of information respecting the British hierarchy. It was very odd. What had I done? I was obliged to confine my attention to the wild-turkey and venison steaks, and presently the plentiful meal came to an end.

We all rose. Mrs. Governor Gunn, at the head of a bevy of flounced silks, swept off in dignified procession to the ladies' cabin, and nothing remained but to smoke and chat, to lounge and "liquor." The bishop edged away from me as soon as he could, and I was left among a knot of planters, overseers, and the like. But these yellow-faced gentlemen did not seem to eye me in a very amicable manner. There was a scowl on every face and a sneer on every lip. I felt angry and uncomfortable, but I could scarcely demand an explanation. I glanced around for my new friends. I did not see them, so I went on deck. The hurricane-deck of a Mississippi boat usually presents a lively scene of animation and stir. So it did on this occasion, but it curiously happened that whenever I joined a gossiping group, that group broke up and dispersed. I might have been one of the plague-stricken in a time of pestilence, so shunned was I, for no apparent reason. I felt puzzled and irate. I was avoided as if I had suddenly become a leper. What was the reason? Never mind! My connexion with the Benjamin Franklin was about

to terminate. The boat was approaching Grand Gulf; I saw the shingled roofs and the church belfries peeping over the tawny levee, and it was time for me to settle with the steward and to see about my baggage. I found black Cornelius as grim and sullen as a bear. He received payment and gratuity with a dry "Tank you, sir!" and did not permit his white teeth to shine upon me any more. I thought, too, there was a reproachful and somewhat resentful expression in his rolling eyes. But I had neither time nor patience to ask for an explanation. I was obliged to bustle up on deck, followed by a coloured man with my bag and portmanteau. There I found Alphonso P. C. Jones and his companions. with their effects, ready to land at the wharf towards which we were rapidly gliding.

"Welcome, my dear sir, to Grand Gulf," said my hospitable inviter; "it is but a small city, but——"

Crack! The clear, sharp detonation of a rifle cut Mr Jones short in his civilities, and then succeeded the bang, bang, of several firearms, and a clamour of voices, and then a

deathly stillness. Mr. Jones looked at his friends; there was a haggard intelligence, a lurking apprehension, visible in every eye for a moment; then the usual calmness of mien came back. I heard a bystander remark, "Something amiss in Grand Gulf, I guess;" and his friend said something about "rowdies."

We went on shore. A couple of lean and shabby German emigrants, with yellow hair and sunburnt skins, were ready to load themselves with the baggage of the party; but, with the exception of these men, a couple of half-clad black children, and a yawning bookkeeper, the wharf was deserted. Nor was there any stir or sign of life among the timber-built stores and taverns, the tall gaunt hotels over which waved the stars and stripes, the wooden houses that stood back from the road in their plots of garden ground. It looked a mournful place, did Grand Gulf; and I half regretted the Benjamin Franklin, as she sidled off from the landing-stage and snorted her course down stream.

Crack again! Bang again! and a hoarse roar, inarticulate and menacing as the utter-

ance of a wild beast's wrath, broke upon our ears, and then for a minute or two the rattle of fire-arms was continuous.

"What's going forward?" asked Mr. Jones, hastily.

The nearest of the German porters grinned humbly as he replied: "It is a pad pusiness, mein herr, put it is only a street affair. It is not apout bolitics."

We were now in sight of a crowd of people, eddying wildly to and fro, who were gathered in front of a pretty house, whose smart verandah and bright paint had an air of pretension unusual in that wretched town.

"By Jehoshaphat!" exclaimed one of the young men, excitedly, pointing out the scene, "it's our boys the row is about."

"Keep cool, keep cool," answered Alphonso P. C. Jones, who was pale but collected. "Step out; push through them, but no running."

On they went, still accompanied by me, though I was completely at a loss to account for the popular fury or the turmoil. We reached the crowd, and began to elbow through them.

"Who on airth may you be?" asked one fierce-looking woodsman whom we jostled.

"More of the gang, I reckon," bawled a former, in homespun.

I was hanging back, but one of the party grasped my arm and urged me on, whispering in a husky tone, "Get in-doors, stranger, if you don't want to cheat the insurance company."

We were now in the garden, the gay flowers of which the mob were trampling down in a reckless way. I could see that the windows were open, but barricaded with logs and furniture, and that two or three gun-barrels were peeping through the chinks. We got close up to the door, and Mr. Jones knocked, uttering a peculiar sharp cry at the same moment. I looked round for our Germans with the luggage: they were not to be seen. After the lapse of a minute—the longest minute I ever spent—the door was cautiously opened, but not to its full extent. "Quick!" muttered a voice at my ear. In we went. There was a shout and a rush: the people surged up to the door, like an angry sea; but the muzzles of two revolvers were thrust

into the faces of the foremost, and they fell back, and we were inside and the door was closed.

I was now, to all appearance, in a besieged place, and one of the beleaguered garrison. And yet I knew nothing of the quarrel, and had no share in it. Of all the strange spectacles this strange continent had hitherto afforded me, this was the most inexplicable. In the midst of the bustle and feverish hurry, as bolts were shot, chains linked, and bars slipped across the door again, I asked repeatedly what was the matter, but in vain: "Thank your stars, stranger, for a whole skin," was all the reply I could elicit. And then everybody went up-stairs. In a front room, prettily decorated in French taste, we found five men fashionably dressed, bejewelled, and white-handed, like my inviters. But there was a terrible confusion reigning there. The costly furniture had been piled up as a barricade before the windows, mixed with firewood, mattresses, and portmanteaus. The five occupants of the room were flushed and heated, with disordered hair, and faces already smeared with black stains of powder. An arsenal of

weapons lay about; guns, swords, pistols, ball-pouches, flasks, kegs, bottles, saddles, whips, and boots, all in confusion. One of the party was binding up his arm in an awkward way, as heavy gouts of blood ran trickling down his shirt-sleeve. The two gentlemen who had admitted us came in along with us, making a total of eleven, not reckoning myself.

"Phillips, what accursed folly has brought on all this?" asked Mr. Jones, angrily.

"Keep your temper, Jones," answered the man who had been hurt; "no need to quarrel among ourselves, I guess. The Grand Gulf vagabonds will have all our scalps before sundown."

Jones shrugged his shoulders.

"How did it happen?"

Another of the group answered, "Oh, the old story; Phillips is so tarnation random. He polished off young Edmonds, and they got to blows a few over the card-table, and Phillips gave him a Kentucky pill, and has brought the wasps about our ears."

"Young Edmonds! Do you mean the judge's son?" asked Jones, with a long face.

"Yes," was the reply; "they've taken him into the doctor's, with breath in him yet, and if he recovers——"

"It's all U. P. with us, misters!" cried another man, gazing from the window.

We—I say we, for I was getting a terrible interest in the affair—rushed forward, and saw what haunts my memory still. Carried on a door by several strong men was the dead body of a young man, quite a youth, partially wrapped in a gaudy Indian blanket. An old man, grey-haired and venerable of aspect, was weeping over the passive form, while a crowd of angry men, with clenched fists and brandished weapons, surrounded it. Meanwhile, one tall fellow, carrying on a pole, as if it were some ghastly banner, the bloody shirt of the murdered man, was haranguing a dense mass of human beings, above whose dark heads we saw the ominous glancing of axe-heads and rifle-barrels.

"See what you've brought on us, Mr. Phillips!" said Jones, bitterly; and he ground his teeth as he spoke.

"The pot and the kettle, I calculate!" answered Phillips, sulkily; "better

keep your breath to try and cheat the hangman!"

There was a yell from the mob beneath: "Kill 'em! Burn the house over their heads! Forward, bhoys!" And twenty shots were fired, splintering the Venetian blinds and crashing into ceiling and wainscot.

"Stand to it!" cried one of the boldest of the besieged. "Blaze away, gentlemen, and we shall beat 'em yet." The speaker fired a rifle at the broad mark of the crowd; a cry of pain succeeded, and then a savage roar.

In a moment there was firing enough on both sides. The reports were deafening, doors and windows rattled again, the room was full of smoke, and the sulphurous steam of the gunpowder half choked me as I got my back against the wall in a recess between the windows, and awaited in comparative security the issue of the affray. I knew nothing of the quarrel. Trojan and Tyrian were alike to me, only I wished with all my heart that Mr. Jones had been less hospitable, or I less complying. The besieged fought hard, firing incessantly with revolver and gun, while I heard Mr. Jones encouraging them. But

four were already down, wounded, on the floor; one of them mortally hurt, to judge by the blood that bubbled from his lips as he gasped for breath. I knelt beside the poor wretch, to offer such unskilful help as I could afford, when there was a crash, a whoop, and a rush, and the barricade was scaled or forced, and the citizens came pouring in, furious as a storming party. Borne down, trampled, sick, and giddy, I was dragged from the scuffle, and found myself in the street, pinioned, and a prisoner. Beside me were the majority of my new acquaintances, tattered, bruised, and their faces hardly to be seen through their masks of blood and gunpowder. They were all bound and captive.

"Drag 'em forward, Up to the big oak. The court sits theer!" bawled fifty voices; and we were roughly hauled or pushed to a grassy space, where a huge solitary tree spread its branches, while under its shade stood a score of farmers and boatmen, well armed.

"Now for it!" shouted the crowd; "we've got 'em, red-handed."

Some one twitched my sleeve, and pointed

to the oak, into whose boughs several men had climbed, and were busy in reeving—as I saw with horror—a rope and running noose to every branch strong enough to serve as an impromptu gallows.

"Silence for Judge Lynch!" bawled an amateur crier.

A gaunt farmer represented the redoubtable judge, and addressed the assembly.

"Fellow citizens, I'm no forky-tongued lawyer, nor yet no stump speaker, but it's easy to clap the saddle on the right hoss. We've had our hosses stole, our niggers 'ticed away, our liquor hocussed, and our dollars spirted out of our pouches. That's bad enough, but when it kem's to blood——"

Here a roar drowned the orator's voice. Next, the crier shouted that the jury had been impanelled, and the prisoners must be put to the bar. I was thrust forward with the rest.

"Guilty, or not?" was the stern demand.

Some of them trembled very much. Jones and Phillips were calm, but it was the calm of desperation.

"Guilty, or not guilty?"

"Bring the farce to an end," cried Jones. "You've got us; more ass I to run back into the trap. Do your worst!"

"Are those ropes ready aloft there?" Judge Lynch called out.

"All ready, Judge," was the rejoinder.

"Then, gentlemen of the jury, your verdict."

"Guilty! All guilty!"

The wild judge exclaimed, "I kin pass but one sentence. Death. A halter apiece, and a good riddance to the city and State!"

A yell of approval broke forth; we were hustled beneath the tree, and a halter soon encircled every neck. Then I found my voice, and loudly appealed: protesting my entire innocence, and that I was a harmless traveller, an Englishman, and so forth. A peal of incredulous laughter decided my appeal.

"Britishers ain't licensed to rob and murder, ye'll larn to your cost," said an old farmer, who held me.

"Smother the hypocrite!" exclaimed a boatman.

"Did ye hear the cantin', cowardly skunk," cried another fellow.

"Can't ye take pattern by your captain, Jones there, and die like a man?"

My eyes following the man's pointed finger, I beheld the blackened face and staring eyeballs of my late acquaintance, as his struggling body dangled some yards above.

"Now for Phillips," was the cry; and I closed my eyes, not to see the wretch's execution.

"Morgan third; the Britisher fourth," announced Judge Lynch. "Up with Phillips! Haul and hold."

"Tchick!" cried somebody, with an unfeeling laugh.

"Whisht! howld your sneaking tongue, not to mock the dyin'," sternly replied some honest Patlander hard by.

"Now, Morgan!" was the next summons.

"Hyar's the deputy sheriff!" cried a voice, as a horse was heard galloping.

"What o' that?" replied another: "the sovereign people aint to be choused out o' their revenge. Besides, Willy Hudson's a good fellow."

Willy Hudson! All the blood rushed from my head to my heart, and back again, and I tingled from head to foot. *My* name was Hudson—my brother's name was William! One glance was enough, as a sun-browned horseman dashed into the crowd. It *was* Willy—the brother I had come to visit—just in time! I forgot exactly what was done and said. I only know that in about two minutes I was unbound, safe, free, arm in arm with my brother, and that the rough fellows who had been about to hang me were nearly wringing my hand off as they shook it, begging pardon for an awkward mistake. It was not only to me that Willy rendered service; I twitched his sleeve, and begged him to do what he could for the miserable men, whatever their faults, still under sentence. He pushed me into a tavern parlour, shut the door, went out, and left me. I heard shouts, laughter, groans, the applause, the mutterings of a mob. After a long time, Willy returned, wiping his face with a handkerchief, very much flushed and dishevelled.

"Wagh!" he exclaimed, "what a tough job! But it's done now, though my tongue

aches with the talking. I did it for you, George, my boy, and, luckily, I'm in favour here. Tar and feathers, instead of hanging, and nine-and-thirty with a cowhide, well laid on, will spoil their beauty for one while. But how came you to be with them?"

"First, Willy, tell me what brought you here? I thought the bank at New Orleans ——"

"Pooh!" interrupted my Americanised brother; "an old story that! It broke down, paying assets and no more. I'm here, agent for a goods insurance company. I'm doing well, and I'm deputy sheriff. Didn't you get my letter at New York? But how about your being with those rascals, of whom two have been hanged, and four shot I hear, eh?"

"Why, they told me they were sportsmen, Willy, and——"

"You greenhorn!" said my brother, good humouredly; "were you thinking of fox-hunting or partridge popping? 'Sportsman' in America means sharper, gambler, thief, swindler, gallows-bird!"

I did not stay long at Grand Gulf.

PICKING UP A POCKET-BOOK.

Several people came in at the gate, not only when the last speaker had withdrawn, but at various times throughout the day, from whom nothing could be extracted by the utmost ingenuity of Mr. Traveller, save what their calling was (when they had any), whence they came, and whither they were going. But, as those who had nothing to tell, clearly could tell nothing in justification of Mr. Mopes the Hermit, Mr. Traveller was almost as well satisfied with them as with any of the rest. Some of the many visitors came of a set purpose, attracted by curiosity; some, by chance, looking in to explore so desolate a place; many had often been there before, and came for drink and halfpence. These regular

clients were all of the professed vagrant order; "and, as I observed to you," Mr. Traveller invariably remarked with coolness when they were gone, "are part of the Nuisance."

When any one approached, either purposely or accidentally, to whom the figure in the blanket was new, Mr. Traveller, acting as a self-constituted showman, did the honours of the place: referring to the Hermit as "our friend in there," and asking the visitor, without further explanation—lest his own impartiality should be called in question—if he could favour our friend in there with any little experience of the living and moving world? It was in answer to this inquiry, that a sunburnt gentleman of middle age, with fine bright eyes, and a remarkable air of determination and self-possession (he had come over from the assize town, he said, to see the sight in the soot and cinders), spake thus:

Office-hours were over, and we were all taking down our straw hats from the pegs on which they dangled; ledgers were clasped, papers put away, desks locked, and the work

of the day was at an end, when the white-haired cashier came sidling towards me. "Mr. Walford, sir, would you stay a moment? Would you step this way? The firm wish to speak to you."

Good old Job Wiginton always described his employers, collectively, as "the firm." They were sacred beings in his eyes, were Spalding and Hausermann, and he had served them for a quarter of a century, with exemplary fidelity and respect, Job Wiginton, like myself, and like the senior partner in that great mercantile house, was an Englishman born and bred. He had kept the books of Spalding and Hausermann for twenty years at Philadelphia, and had cheerfully followed them to California, when they decided on settling in San Francisco City, five years before. The younger clerks, French or American for the most part, were rather disposed to make a butt of the simple honest old cashier; but he and I had been very good friends during the four years of my employment, and I always entertained a sincere respect for the old man's sterling good qualities. Now, however, for a reason I will pre-

sently explain, I was considerably taken aback by the communication which Mr. Wiginton made in his own formal way.

"The firm wish to see me?" I stammered, with a tell-tale colour rising in my face. Old Job nodded assent, coughed, and carefully wiped his gold-rimmed spectacles. I had noticed, in spite of my own confusion, that the cashier was dejected and nervous; his voice was husky, his hand trembled as he rubbed the dim glasses, and there was an unwonted moisture in his round blue eyes. As I followed Job into the inner parlour, where the merchants usually sat during business hours, I marvelled much what this wholly unexpected summons might portend. I had formerly been on terms of great and cordial intimacy with my employers; but for the last three months, my intercourse, with the senior partner in especial, had been strictly confined to business matters and dry routine. It was not that I had done anything to forfeit the good opinion of the firm. My employers had still the same confidence in me, the same regard for me, as heretofore; but there was an end, if not of friendship, at least of cordiality.

This partial estrangement dated from the day when, with Emma Spalding, smiling through tears and blushes at my side, I had ventured to tell the rich merchant that I loved his only daughter, and that my love was returned. It is an old, old story. We were two young persons of the same country and creed, alike in tastes and education, and in other respects, wealth excepted, not so ill matched; and we were together on a foreign shore, among strange people. We had been suffered to associate familiarly together, to read poetry, sing duets, and so forth; for Emma had no mother to watch against the approach of poverty-stricken suitors, and Mr. Spalding was a proud man, and not given to suspicion. Hence we glided—as millions of couples have done before, and will again—down the smooth rose-strewn path that leads from friendship to love. I am sure of one thing: it was not my employer's wealth, or the idea of Emma's probable expectations from her father—who had but two children, a son and a daughter, between whom to divide the accumulations of a life spent in honourable toil—which allured me. But the time came when soft words and

fond looks had to give place to an avowal of attachment. I spoke out to Emma, without premeditation; and, once across the Rubicon, other considerations, undreamed of as yet, came to beset me, mockingly. What would Mr. Spalding think of me? Surely, he could form but one judgment of the poor clerk, with no property beyond his pitiful savings, who had dared to entangle the affections of his master's daughter? My course was clear. I must tell him the truth, at whatever cost to myself.

I did so. The disclosure was hurried on by some slight unforeseen circumstance, as my proposal had been, but I was at least candid in my avowals. To do Mr. Spalding justice, he rejected my suit in as gentle and courteous a fashion as the harsh operation would admit of. But, cut to the heart, I withdrew from his presence, very very wretched, and had for many days afterwards, serious thoughts of excluding myself from observation, becoming a solitary man, and leading a gloomy and moody life. Better thoughts, however, lying deeper within me, admonished me of the utter worthlessness of a purposeless

existence, and of the utter contemptibility of the soul that can sink into it. And thus it fell out that I ceased to visit my employer as a private friend, and yet remained in his employ.

Was I mean-spirited for staying on thus? I cannot pretend to decide so nice a point, but I know that it was a great stimulant to me to have obtained a moral victory over myself, and some relief to the disappointment of my dearest hopes that I was still allowed to breathe the same air as Emma Spalding, to catch a glimpse of her sweet saddened face, were it but on the way to church, though for three weary months we never interchanged a word.

So I was not a little surprised when Job Wiginton summoned me to the presence of "the firm." My heart beat quickly as the old cashier turned the handle of the door. What could Mr. Spalding want of me? I had kept the promise he had wrung from me; I had abstained from any intrusion, any unlicensed correspondence. Surely, surely, he could not send for me merely to say that a rejected suitor was ineligible even as a servant,

and that our connexion must cease? In the larger of the two adjacent rooms, a room hung in Spanish fashion with stamped and gilded leather, and heavily furnished with dark mahogany from Honduras, I found the firm. Mr. Spalding, a tall thin grey-headed gentleman, was pacing up and down the apartment in great agitation. Mr. Hausermann, a German, as his name implies, sat before a table covered with papers, ejaculating guttural exclamations of wonder from time to time, with a look of hopeless perplexity in his fat pink face. The cashier entered along with me, and closed the door.

"Ah, mein Himmel!" muttered the junior partner: a hale, portly man, but of a flabby nature, morally and physically, compared with the energetic chief of the house. "ach; we were petter to have never peen born, than live to see this!"

Job Wigington gave a groan of sincere sympathy. I quickly perceived that something had gone wrong, and as quickly did I see that this mysterious something had no direct reference to my audacity in winning the heart of Emma Spalding. What was

amiss? There is one grisly ghost that always haunts the imagination of the more intelligent subordinates of a commercial firm—Bankruptcy. But the house had been such a prudent house, so steady and well ballasted, had glided so demurely along in safe old-world grooves, that it was rather ridiculed in consequenee by the mushroom firms that daily arose or collapsed around us. But I had little time to think, for Mr. Spalding stopped in his walk, came abruptly up to me, and took me by both hands. "George Walford," said the old merchant, with more emotion in his voice and features than he had ever shown before, "I have not been kind to you lately. You were a good friend to me —before—before——" and here he reddened somewhat, and ceased speaking.

I glanced towards Mr. Hausermann, but he looked so fat and helpless as he sat in his arm-chair, murmuring phrases in his native tongue, that I saw no explanation was to be looked for in that quarter. So I told Mr. Spalding, in as firm a tone as possible, that our mutual esteem had, I hoped, survived our intimacy, and that I still felt myself a

faithful friend to him and his, and would gladly prove myself one.

"I thought so—I thought so," said the merchant, looking pleased for a moment; "you are a good lad, George, and that's why I come to you for help in my sore need, hard and harsh as you may have thought me the other day—when—never mind!"

"I was first to say it," exclaimed Mr. Hausermann. "'Let us call Shorge Walford,' say I. 'He has got ver goot prains; ver goot young man.'"

A quarter of a century spent among Anglo-Saxons had never taught Mr. Hausermann the English language in its purity. Indeed, his life, out of office hours, was spent entirely with Teutons like himself, who swarm all over America, and with whom he could enjoy German conversation, Rhine wine, and the black coffee of the fatherland. I should never get to the end of the interview if I described it verbatim, chronicling the broken sentences and vague talk of the junior partner, and the comments of Job Wiginton. The confidential cashier sympathised with the distress of his employers as a faithful dog might have done,

and was about as likely to suggest a practical remedy. Mr. Wiginton was worthy of all trust; he was as close as wax and as honest as the day, but he was a mere machine for the casting up of sums, the balancing of books, and locking of safes. Mr. Hausermann was not much cleverer than the cashier; he was an admirable arithmetician, could detect an error of a halfpenny in a problem involving billions, and his penmanship was magnificent. But, with these attainments, he owed his present position in commerce, not to his abilities, but to the florins he had inherited, and to the talent and keenness of his English partner. It was from the chief of the house himself that I heard the following tale:—Mr. Spalding, as I have said, had but two children, Emma, and her brother Adolphus; his wife had died on the voyage from Philadelphia, and his affection centred in his boy and girl. Unluckily, Adolphus did not turn out well, was wild and extravagant, and squandered his liberal allowance among horse-jockeys and gamblers. Mr. Spalding, strict with all the world besides, was rather lax and indulgent where his son was concerned. The young

man was very good-looking and of pleasing address; he had been the darling of his dead mother; and the father was very patient and forbearing with him, for her sake. The youth went from bad to worse, got deeper into debt and evil company, seldom came home, and seriously impaired his health by a long course of excesses. All this I knew, for Adolphus was a clerk in the house, nominally at least, though he hardly ever occupied his stool in the office. But what I did not know was, that Adolphus Spalding, in his eagerness to settle a number of so-called debts of honour, had been led to rob his father. He had forged the signatures of Spalding and Hausermann to a cheque for thirty thousand dollars, payable at sight, and purporting to be drawn by the merchants on their bankers in New York. More than this: he had abstracted from his father's desk a Russian-leather pocket-book, containing bills and securities to a great amount, and this he had placed in the hands of the same vile associate who had undertaken to present the cheque at the counter of the New York bank.

"The scoundrel is gone northward already.

He started last Tuesday, by the way of Panama, along with the mail," said Mr. Spalding. "You know the man, I dare say, for he was very notorious in the town—Joram Heckler."

"Dr. Joram Heckler!" I exclaimed, as I recalled to mind the dark clever face of the young man alluded to: a plausible, well-mannered person, who had been sub-editor of a San Francisco newspaper.

"Yes, Doctor, or Colonel, Heckler," responded Mr. Spalding, with a bitter smile, "for it appears that he has assumed a military title on the journey back to the north. He possessed great influence over the mind of my misguided son; he was the tempter in this accursed robbery; and I doubt not that he intends to appropriate the entire spoil to himself."

I now asked Mr. Spalding, as delicately as I could, how he had obtained his information.

It appeared that Adolphus, whose feeble frame, exhausted by hard living, was ill fitted to sustain the fierce excitement of the felonious act he had committed, had sickened of

a fever, immediately after the departure of his accomplice.

"The wretched boy lies on his bed upstairs, quivering betwixt life and death," said the father, with a faltering voice, "and in his delirium he has betrayed his guilt. His sister, who has watched at his bedside like an angel as she is, dear girl, she was frightened at his ravings of self-accusation. She called me, and with my own ears I heard the son I was so proud of—my petted boy—tell how he had cheated and plundered me."

The old merchant staggered to a chair, and I saw the tears trickle between the fingers with which he tried to hide the workings of his wrinkled face.

After a time he grew more calm. Then he developed his plan, in which broke out his habitual decision and force of character. Before all things, the honour of the house must be saved. The value of the money at stake (though a large sum) was trifling, compared to the disgrace, the loss of credit, the blot upon the name of Spalding. Yes, at any cost, the young man's shameful act must be hidden in darkness. The cheque must not

be presented, the bills must not be negotiated. But how to prevent the tempter from realising the benefits of his ill-gotten booty? He was off—he was speeding towards New York by the quick Panama route; in a few weeks he would be there. No pursuit seemed possible. The delay till the start of the next mail would be fatal. I remembered the Pony Express, the swift overland mail whereby we Californian residents can most rapidly communicate with the civilised world, and I suggested this resource.

Mr. Spalding shook his head. "No, that would never do; I might send a despatch, no doubt, to stop the payment of the cheque. I might perhaps procure Heckler's arrest on his arrival in New York, but thence would spring inquiry, doubt, suspicion, and the whole black affair would creep into the journals before a week was out. No. I have but one hope, one chance: I must send a trustworthy person—I am too old to go myself—a trustworthy person to hasten to New York by the perilous route across the Rocky Mountains, and he must arrive before Heckler, and must get the papers from him

by violence or stratagem. George Walford, you are the man I have selected."

"I, sir."

I was stupified. Before my fancy rose, like a panorama, the long route, then but lately explored, that traversed the enormous continent from sea to sea: a route teeming with dangers. All I had ever heard or read of prairie travel, of famine, fire, the assaults of wild beasts, and of human foes more pitiless still, crowded on my memory at once. I thought of the vast distance, of the almost herculean fatigues to be undergone, of the icy barrier which the Rocky Mountains stretched across the track, as if to bar the progress of presumptuous man; and though I am no fainter of heart than my neighbours, I dare say my countenance expressed dismay and repugnance. Indeed, I am sure it did, for Mr. Hausermann groaned, and said, "Donner! what shall we to now!"

"Walford," said Mr. Spalding, "I don't wish to dissemble with you. I am asking you to incur the certainty of very great fatigue, hardship and danger. I am asking you to risk life itself to save the honour of the

house and that of my own family. I do not make such a request without proposing a proportionate reward. There, hear me out! I don't offer you money for such a service. Come back successful, and you shall be a partner in the house of Spalding and Hausermann; and if you and Emma are still of the same mind three months hence——"

I trembled with joy as I interrupted my employer. "I'll go, sir, gladly and most willingly."

"That's a prave poy. I knew he would!" ejaculated the German; and the cashier rubbed his hands joyfully.

"When can you be ready to start?" asked Mr. Spalding.

"Directly. In half an hour, if you please."

"An hour will do," said Mr. Spalding, with a smile at my eagerness. "Bodesson shall be at the door by that time, with his carriage and his best horses. You must save your strength as much as you can for the prairie. You have a six-shooter I know. Get ready what requisites for the journey will go into small compass. You shall have an ample supply of money—spend it freely,

lavishly, and don't spare horseflesh or gold upon the way. I would give half my fortune to place you speedily on the pavement of New York. You are an ambassador with full powers, George, and your own wit and courage must carry you through. Now, you had better prepare for the road."

I lingered.

"Anything more to say?" asked the merchant, good humouredly.

"If I could speak for a moment—just an instant—to Miss Spalding?"

"She is at her brother's bedside," replied the old man, hurriedly. "But—yes, you are right. You *shall* see her before you start."

I seemed to make but one step to the house where I lodged. I spent ten minutes in hastily arranging my belongings—and it is wonderful how much a man can condense into ten minutes when he is under the influence of strong excitement—charged my revolver, packed a few things in a small bag, and ran back like a greyhound. Mr. Spalding gave me some fuller instructions, and handed to me a heavy parcel of gold and silver, as well as a bundle of bank-notes. I was to

keep the bank-paper until I reached the civilised world; in the desert, my only hope would be to bribe in specie the half-tamed wanderers of the west. Mr. Spalding was still talking when Bodesson, one of the principal liverymen of San Francisco, drove his spanking pair of Spanish horses up to the door. Then the merchant went up-stairs, and returned with his daughter. Dear Emma! she was pale, and thinner than of old, but her eyes were bright and loving, and her words, full of hope and constancy, gave me fresh courage, and a resolve to do or die. Our parting was very brief. A few hurried whispers—a hasty renewal of the old vows and troth-plight—and for a moment I caught her in my arms and kissed her cheek, and in the next I was gone. I sat by Bodesson's side; the whip cracked; off flew the foaming horses along the street; and I looked back and waved a farewell in answer to Mr. Spalding's waving hand and Emma's handkerchief. Then we turned the corner, and darted along the road.

Bodesson was well paid, and he kept the mettled horses at their work over many a

mile of ground. I seemed to start cheerfully, and under good auspices. My heart was full of hope. The gay French Creole by my side was a merry companion; he sang Canadian songs, whistled, chirruped to the bounding bays, and chattered incessantly.

"Monsieur was going to the prairies! Ah, très bien! The prairies were ver intéressantes, ver moch so. But monsieur must take care when he got there—must not stir from the protection of ze dragoons, or les sauvages, ze ferocious Indians, would carry off monsieur's cheveux—what you call scalp!"

So the Frenchman prattled on. He believed I was going to Salt Lake City on business, and never doubted that I should voyage with a caravan under escort of the States' dragoons. What would he have said had he known that I was to traverse that land of danger and hunger *alone?*

My journey to the eastern border of California was not remarkable enough to justify me in dwelling here on its details. Spending money freely, I was able to proceed almost entirely in wheeled carriages more or less rude, and I contrived to push along over

sorry roads at a respectable pace. I slept in the vehicles during the dark hours, snatching a broken slumber as best I could, in the midst of jolting and swaying. Sometimes even a bribe could not induce my Mexican or American drivers to risk the perils of a stony road at night, and then I recruited my strength by rest, but was always ready to start at cock-crow. I knew well what was before me, and that all the fatigue I endured was child's play to what was in store. I had been on the prairies before—those, at least, which lie east of the Rocky Mountains. Mr. Spalding was well aware that I was a good horseman, expert in the use of fire-arms, and of a robust constitution. These are not the common attributes of a clerk, but I had not been bred to the desk. My father had been esteemed rich, till at his death, in embarrassed circumstances, I had been left to battle with poverty as I might; I had kept hunters at Oxford, and had been passionately fond of field sports. I had kept up the habit of taking brisk exercise, and now I was about to find the benefit of trained muscles and robust health. I did not disguise from my-

self that I was embarking on an enterprise full of risks. I might starve in the desert, whitened as it was by the bones of many an emigrant. I might perish miserably in one of those fires that rush like flaming serpents through the boundless sea of grass. And if my scalp did not blacken in the smoke of some Indian wigwam, fever or sheer fatigue might make an end of my life and hopes at once. Or, I might reach New York too late. It was gall and wormwood to me to think that Joram Heckler was pressing on towards the north with all the speed of a fast steamer. The very thought made me bound and stamp my foot on the floor of the rude mail-cart, as if I could quicken my progress by such a gesture. How I prayed that contrary winds might delay the packet on its passage from Aspinwall to the Empire City!

I reached Carson City, on the border of the desert, and there I made a brief halt that I might prepare for the coming effort. I was perfectly well aware that the most dangerous and difficult part of the road was that lying between California and the Mormon settlements. Once beyond the Utah territory,

I might well hope to escape the arrows and tomahawk of the savage. I found Carson full of returning emigrants, diggers going back with their pelf to the Atlantic states, Mormon converts, and traders who had emptied their waggons in Californian markets. These good folks were all waiting for the regular escort of national dragoons, under whose guard they were to travel. It was impossible for me to move so slowly, and I accordingly bought a bag of sun-dried beef, another of parched corn, some blankets, and such matters, and a powerful horse handsomely accoutred with a bridle and saddle of Mexican make. I bought the latter from an American dealer, who was mightily tickled at the idea of my making my way alone over the prairies. "I give you credit for your grit, sartainly, mister," said he: "it is good, and no mistake; but I guess you'd better sleep upon the idea a few times more. Them Indian scalpers will lift your ha'r, sure as hogs yield bacon. Won't you believe me? Come along, then, and ax another man's opinion!" And he dragged me towards a sort of tavern, the porch of which was crowded by men and

women, French, Spanish, German, Yankee, and mulatto, all of whom were gathered round a lathy dark-haired young fellow in a trim half-military dress, that would have passed for that of a policeman but for the red flannel shirt and Mexican sombrero he wore. This man had keen mobile features, and was hardened by constant work and weather into little more than muscle and bone; he wore spurred boots and thick "savers," and was cracking a whip as he gaily chatted with the crowd, who laughed at his wit in a way that proved him a prime favourite. He was, in fact, one of the salaried riders of the "Pony Express," ready to start with the bag of dispatches, the instant the courier from San Francisco should arrive with it.

"Yes, colonel; yes, gals," I heard him say; "I'm downright sorry to leave, but duty is duty, ain't it? If the Indians don't rub me out——"

"Rub you out, Shem? Catch a racoon asleep!" cried one of the rider's admiring friends.

"Waal!" said Shem, with a modest voice, but boastful twinkle in his restless eye, "the

varmints have tried a time or two, but they've found Shem Grindrod rather a tough nut to crack, they have. When a chap's Kentucky bred, real right down hard hickory, 'taint so easy to lift his ha'r as——Service to ye, stranger!"

For his eye had lighted on me.

"Shem," cried the horse-dealer, "here's a gentleman wants to cross the parara, all alone, on hossback, Broadway fashion. What do *you* say to that?"

There was a general laugh. Shem took off his hat with mock respect.

"Whoop!" he cried. "If that ain't clear grit in the down-easter dandy! You'll see snakes, mister, I reckon. There's no accommodation for gen-teel persons, and you'll jest get your hoss stole, or chawed up by the wolves, and you'll lose yourself and die for want of a dinner, if you don't fall in with the Injuns—and if you do, Jehoshaphat!"

All this would have been provoking to some men, but I knew the American character too well to be out of temper. Shem evidently took me for a presumptuous townsman, plunging wantonly into the lion's mouth, and was

good-naturedly discouraging my rashness. With some trouble, I drew him apart, and commenced a private conversation. I told him that I was bound for the eastern states, that my business was imperative, but that if he could help me I would pay him most liberally for the aid rendered. For I had formed a crude idea that if I could procure the privilege of using the relays of spare horses kept at the different stations on the route, for the use of the mail-bag riders, I might accomplish the most awkward part of the journey with great rapidity. Shem, however, though not ill-natured, dashed my hopes to the ground. Such a concession would be "agin all rule." The servants of the Express Company "darn't do it." It was not to be thought of. I must wait for the caravan.

I did not wait for the caravan, but set forth that very day. The people gave me a half ironical cheer as I rode out of the straggling street of Carson, but I saw the Yankee dealer shake his head and screw up the corners of his mouth, as if he considered me little better than a suicide.

There was no use in letting the grass grow

under my feet, so I pushed briskly ahead. I was riding a powerful horse, one of those bred in Kentucky or Tennessee, and which will sell for a high price on the western border of prairieland. To find the way in broad daylight was easy. There was a broad track made by the passage of countless waggons and beasts of burden. I had a compass, but I really did not need it. I covered many a weary league of ground in the course of that day's ride. Here and there, among the forked streamlets which were feeders of the Carson, I came to farms where I easily procured corn for my horse and food for myself. I had come to two resolutions: one, to economise my little store of jerked beef as much as possible; the other, to refuse all hospitable proffers of whisky, being convinced that on water only could such trying work as that before me be accomplished. I kept on, with brief pauses, through the day, and held to the track as long as the moonlight served me, urging on my flagging steed to the very limits of his strength. Then, in the dark, I dismounted, took off saddle and bridle, hobbled my horse, and tethered him so that he

had ample space to graze. Then, I lay down, wrapped in my blankets, pillowed my head upon my saddle, and fell asleep with my weapons by my side.

I awoke with a start, in the pitch dark night, and could not well remember where I was. My horse was uneasy, and his abrupt motions had disturbed me. I heard a rustling in the long grass, a scratching, a pawing of light feet amongst the herbage, and a whining sound as of hungry dogs whimpering for food. Dogs? There were no dogs there. Wolves! And my horse, on whose security my life might depend, was trembling and bathed in perspiration. I had kindled no fire, apprehensive lest the light should attract some band of prowling savages; and now the coyotés were gathering around us like flies about honey. For myself, I felt no fear: the wolf of America is very different from the "grey beast" of German forests or Pyrenean snows. But my poor nag was in danger, and his very tremors were adding perilously to the exhaustion of the long and hurried ride. I rose, and began groping about for brushwood. Luckily I was still in a well-watered region,

where shrubs and undergrowth abounded, and where the gigantic cotton-wood trees reared their majestic forms beside the streamlets. I soon came upon a clump of brush, and cutting with my sharp and heavy knife as much as I could carry in both arms, I returned with it, and cleared a little space of the grass, which was long enough to be dangerous in the event of its catching fire. I then took out my tin box of lucifers, struck a light, and kindled a fire: though not very easily, for the heavy dew stood in great glistening beads on grass and shrub, and the moistened wood emitted many a cloud of pungent and dark smoke, before I could coax the sullen embers to burst forth in the required blaze. All this time, I had to give an occasional halloo, rattling a tin cup against the barrel of my revolver, for the purpose of intimidating the wolves; while it was necessary to pat and soothe by voice and hand the poor horse itself, which was tugging at the tethering-rope in a way that threatened to break it every instant. At last, to my great joy, the fire leaped up, red and cheery, its bright beams illumined a little radiant patch of

prairie, and, hovering in the shadows on the edge of this illuminated spot, I saw the slinking coyotés, the smallest and most timid, but also the most cunning, variety of the wolf of America. Presently I flung a firebrand among the pack, and they vanished into the darkness, but for half an hour I could hear their howls of disappointment, growing fainter and fainter, as the distance increased. My horse was quieter after the disappearance of the wolves, and in about an hour I ventured to return to my blankets and my repose, after piling a fresh heap of brush on the steadily glowing fire. Not very long afterwards, a feeling of intense cold awoke me by slow degrees. I opened my eyes. The fire was low; its embers glowed crimson, fading gradually into blackness. Overhead was the dim sky, the vast host of stars having the peculiar pale and sickly hue which heralds the dawn. It was very cold. There was a rushing sound in the air, and the grass of the prairie was tossed to and fro in wild confusion; a strong wind was blowing—the norther. This was the first blast of the chilly north wind that annually sets in at the close of the unhealthy

season in the south. It had a piercing and glacial effect, coming, as it did, from the Polar ice-fields, and across the Rocky Mountain range; but I gladly hailed it, for I remembered that it would be dead against the mail steamer that was breasting the waters of the Mexican Gulf with Joram Heckler and his plunder on board. I might beat him yet!

But the wind increased in force; it was blowing like a hurricane, and I shivered in spite of my warm poncho and blankets. My horse had lain down, and was trembling with cold. I was obliged to spare him a blanket; he was a "States" horse, swifter, but not so hardy and useful for prairie travel as the mustangs of the plains. The wind did not diminish as the sun rose, red and angry, and a new cause of alarm began to haunt me. I had heard of travellers utterly weatherbound for days among the prairies, on account of the fury of the resistless wind. And time was so valuable to me! I felt sick at heart as the chilly hours of early morning crept on, and almost despaired of success. I was benumbed and stiff; the dew had been turned to icicles by the sudden cold; and now every waving

blade of grass seemed crested with a diamond glittering and flashing in the level sunshine. By nine o'clock the wind began to abate; it slackened very gradually, and at half-past ten I considered that I might resume my journey. My breakfast was not a luxurious one; a mouthful of beef and parched maize, swallowed in the intervals of saddling my horse and rolling up my blankets. Then, I drew up the iron peg to which the halter was attached, rolled up the halter, lasso fashion, at my saddle bow, and mounted. I was less awkward in the every-day routine of prairie life than might be supposed. Years ago, before I entered Spalding and Hausermann's employ, I had spent some weeks in a frontier fort, as the guest of the officers of a United States Ranger regiment. I had accompanied my hosts on several hunts and scouting expeditions against hostile Indians, and had found some amusement in picketing my steed, lighting camp fires, and so forth: little dreaming that my whole earthly happiness would ever depend on my proficiency in such arts. As the sun rose in the pale blue sky, nature assumed a more cheerful appearance; the

icicles and hoar-frost melted, and the air became merely bracing and agreeable, as the bitter cold passed away. On we went, following the plain trail of the waggon trains, up and down the gently rolling slopes of the undulating prairie. I noticed with some dismay that my horse was no longer the mettled creature that had pranced so gaily out of Carson the day before. At first he certainly answered my voice and the pressure of my knee, by stepping out gallantly; but after a while he began to flag, bore heavily on the bit, and required a frequent touch of the spur. It was clear I had taxed his powers too severely on the previous day. He was going weakly under me, in a spiritless way that spoke volumes. What was I to do? I had plenty of money, but money cannot prove a talisman in the wilderness. There was not a farm between the place where I stood and the Great Salt Lake itself. My only chance in procuring a remount, lay in meeting some one who would sell me a steed, and this was far from a certainty. I was chewing the cud of bitter reflections when I heard the light tramp of a galloping horse behind me. Quickly I

turned my head, and saw a booted rider dashing gaily along over the swells of the prairie; his trim coat, half opened, showed a red flannel shirt; and his Mexican sombrero was bound with a cord of tarnished gold. He had a revolving carbine pistol at his saddle-bow, and at his side hung from his shoulder-belt his leathern despatch-bag. It was my acquaintance of yesterday—Shem Grindrod.

"Mornin', stranger!" he called out, cheerily; "I did'nt skear you, yesterday, it seems, by my yarns about Injuns. 'Twas Gospel truth, for all that. Camped out, I reckon? Your hoss does look a little the wuss for wear, mister, though. You've pushed him a goodish stretch, you have."

We rode on for some distance side by side. My poor horse was inspired to do his best by the presence of the other horse, and together we sped over the country: my steed trotting, Shem's mustang galloping, for Spanish-American horses have but one pace when urged beyond a walk. Shem was much more kind and even polite in his manner than on the previous day. He told me, bluntly, that he respected a fellow that proved himself a man,

but that what he hated worse than copper-head snakes was a Broadway dandy giving himself adventurous airs. My horsemanship had won Shem's esteem, and he sympathised heartily with me when he saw that I was really bent on crossing the desert at any risk.

"Your hoss is a good bit of stuff, mister," said he, "but I'm afraid he's pretty nigh used up for one while. Now you listen to me. The best thing you can do, is to buy a mustang fust chance you get. There'll be hunters passing south, and p'raps they'll trade. When you get right out among the plains, you stick to the trail well, and if a grass fire blinds it, you take your compass and bear up for east by north. Keep that pistol of yourn ready, and if you do see Injuns, keep cool. Don't waste a shot. Every round bit of lead is worth a life on the parara. Good-bye, wish you luck."

Shem headed his horse for one of the Express stations, a little lonely block-house, with a stockaded yard, which was garrisoned by a few of his comrades, and where a relay of fresh horses was kept. I looked wistfully at the block-house and the well-stocked corral, and

then turned away with my tired steed to resume my weary travel. I knew that early in the afternoon I should reach another station of the same kind, and there I meant to apply for refreshment and shelter, in case my horse should knock up altogether. Before I had gone a mile, I saw my friend Shem, on a fresh steed, scouring the plain. He waved his hand, and gave me a cheer of recognition, and I looked after him enviously as he flew like an arrow up the slope, and vanished in the distance. By good luck, however, I almost instantly encountered a party of white men, the first travellers I had seen. These turned out to be three trappers returning from Oregon, with a fair stock of peltry loaded on two mules. They were all well mounted on "Indian ponies," and one of them led by a lariat a powerful and shapely mustang, whose bright eye and wide nostrils matched well with his wiry limbs. He had been captured on the plains, not two months before, one of a wild herd; but he was sufficiently broken in to be useful in prairie fashion. I struck a bargain with the trapper, by which my exhausted but more valuable quadruped was bartered for

the half-wild mustang; the trapper also receiving four gold eagles. The arrangement was mutually satisfactory, and as the tall Kentuckian helped me to shift my saddle and bridle to the spotted nag I had just acquired, I saw his eyes twinkle with self-congratulation.

"One word of advice, colonel," said the trapper, as I placed the gold in his hard brown hand; "keep your eyes skinned as you go along, and don't let the cussed Redskins double upon you. There's Indian sign about, there is. I saw the print of a moccassin, down yonder by the spring, where the Indians never come for any good, mister. You mind—Utahs ain't to be trusted, and Shoshonies are worse. As for Rapshoes, Heaven help you, colonel, if they ketch you alone! There's Indians about. I smell 'em."

"I wish you'd got a good rifle on your shoulder, mister," said another, as I mounted; "six shooters is very handy tools, but nothing sickens the Indians like a good five-foot bit of holler iron, that air true."

I took leave of these good fellows, who wished me a safe journey in the heartiest way, though evidently disbelieving in the likelihood

that a "greenhorn" could carry his property and scalp safe across the desert. The mustang was fresh, and darted along at that untiring though not very speedy gallop which animals of that hardy race can maintain for a very considerable time. We made capital progress: the country grew drier, and the grass shorter, and the swampy bottoms and trickling brooks were fewer. I met with no adventure, except that my new purchase put his foot into an outlying burrow, as we skirted a "village" of prairie dogs, and gave us both a roll on the turf; but we were unhurt, and I had luckily kept my grasp of the bridle, or I should have lost my horse. Once I thought I saw something hovering on the edge of the horizon, but whether savages, buffaloes, or wild horses, I could not determine. After riding several miles I came to a place where the trail dipped suddenly into a low tract of alluvial earth, intersected by a stream of some magnitude, and shaded by a belt of lofty cotton-wood trees. I traced here the fresh footprints of a horse which must just have passed, for the bruised grass had but partially risen around the edges. "Crack, bang!"

went the sharp report of fire-arms ringing from the thicket below, and with the reports mingled the horrid war-whoop of the savage. Grasping my pistol, I dashed in among the trees, and beheld poor Shem Grindrod, bleeding, reeling in his saddle, and beset by a party of six or seven Indians, mounted, and in their hideous panoply of war. Shem had been pierced by three arrows: he was fainting with loss of blood: but he fronted the savages boldly, and one Indian lay at his feet, rolling in the agonies of death. My arrival changed the current of the fight; two rounds from my revolver, the second of which laid low a muscular barbarian, smeared with yellow ochre, who was pressing on Shem with an uplifted tomahawk, sufficed for their discomfiture. Probably they took me for the advanced guard of a party of whites. At any rate, they fled at speed across the plain.

I was just in time to break Shem's fall, as the poor fellow dropped from his saddle, feebly murmuring, "Thank ye, mister. You've saved my scalp, any way, if 'twas just too late to save ——" His voice was hushed here, and he fainted in my arms.

There was a metal flask of whisky dangling at the mail-bag rider's saddle-bow, along with his blanket and havresack; I hastily unscrewed the stopper, and contrived to force a few drops into the mouth of the wounded man. Then, I tore my cravat into strips, and with it and my handkerchief tried to bind up the hurts Shem had received, after vainly attempting to withdraw the barbed arrows. Two of the injuries were mere flesh wounds, more painful than dangerous; but the third was of a more serious character: the shaft was imbedded in Shem's side, though the hemorrhage was trifling in appearance when compared with the abundant flow of blood from the other injuries. In about a couple of minutes Shem revived sufficiently to look up. I was touched by the gratitude his eyes expressed. Probably, poor lad, he had received but a scanty share of kindness in his scrambling life.

"Do you suffer much pain from the arrow wounds?" I asked. "Take a drop more of the whisky; it will give you strength, and if I can once help you to proceed as far as the block-house——"

"'Tain't no manner of use, stranger, my duty to ye, all the same," replied the rider, after swallowing a small quantity of spirits. "I've got my finish at last. A chap that's fit in the border fights ever since he could squint along a gun, don't need no doctor to tell him when he's got goss, *he* don't.

I could not disguise from myself that Shem was right. His face showed a ghastly change; it was ashen white, pinched, and thin: while the lips twitched, and the eyes had acquired that peculiar eager glance, and restless craving brightness, which we never notice except in those over whom death hovers. But I tried to cheer the poor fellow; succeeded in stanching the blood that flowed from his arm, transpierced by two of the iron-tipped reeds; and begged him to keep up his hope and courage.

"'Tain't worth wasting words upon, mister," gasped Shem; "I knowed I'd my call; onst I felt the cold and the rankling pain that follered the smart of that cussed arrow in my ribs. I'm jest bleeding to death, inwardly, I am, and all the surgeon chaps in the States, couldn't help me, no, nor yet the

cleverest bonesetter in the pararas. But you cheated the curs out of my scalp, stranger. They had a hanker to get this child's ha'r, they had, to dance round in their darned village, them Shoshonies. My! How the squaws will jeer and mock 'em when they go back empty-fisted, and leavin' two of the pack behind 'em, too!" And Shem, with death in his face and at his heart, actually laughed. He had to catch painfully at his breath before he spoke again. "Stranger, it's an ill wind blows nobody any good. You hark to me. What I could't give you, nouther for dollars nor axin', you'll get now. Go on to the station; take this here mail-bag along; give it 'em, and tell 'em the rights of what's chanced. They'll turn out fast enough, I'll warrant, and they'll put me under the turf afore the wolves pick my bones. And another rider must go on with the bag. And tell 'em 'twere my dyin' wish, they'd give you a fresh hoss at each block, and so let you go with the rider, and push ahead. The Co. won't be riled at the breach of rules —seein' you saved the bag, let alone my scalp, and——"

He broke down here. I was quite melted at the unselfish thoughtfulness of this poor dying creature, this untaught, half-wild frontier-man, who could care for my speedy journey while his own vital breath was trembling on his livid lips. I gave him a third sup of whisky, begging him to let me know if I could communicate his last wishes to any distant friend or relation?

"There's a gal that lives to Hampton Town," said Shem, almost in a whisper, "the darter of a dealer that trades in mules, she be; and Ruth and I——Oh, 'tis a pity the wedding day were put off, cause the Co. gives pensions to wives, but none to sweethearts, and Ruth's father met with misfortins in trade, and she'd ha' been glad of a few dollars a year, poor thing!"

I asked his sweetheart's name, for, as I assured him, I felt certain that the house of Spalding and Hausermann would befriend her for his sake, if through the service I had rendered Shem I were really enabled to do my errand with a success otherwise unattainable.

"Ruth Moss," said Shem, in his weak

voice; "that's her surname and given name. She's a good girl, pretty and good, is Ruth, and only too tender a flower for a rough borderman like me; goes to chapel reg'lar, and writes like a print book."

He then begged that I would send to Ruth a certain knot of ribbon which he had received from her as a keepsake, or merely snatched in a lover's whim, I do not know which; at any rate, I found it carefully wrapped in deerskin, in the bosom of his dress, but ah! with a deep dark stain of blood marring the gay blue of the silk. The arrow had passed nearly through that humble love-token. Shem further prayed me, that as I passed by the Round Pond Station, between Fort Bridge and Red Creek, I would tell his old father, Amos Grindrod, that he, Shem, had "died like a man,"

"The old man'll be cut up, I'm afraid," murmured Shem, whose eyes were getting dim; "but he'll be glad to know my ha'r warn't lifted. Tell him I were wiped out by the band of Mad Buffalo, the Shoshonie. 'Twar Mad Buffalo hisself that sent the arrow through me, just as I kivered him with the

carbine. The shunk! Many a noggin of drink I've given him when he come tradin' to the fort. But there war a grudge atween him and me, and he's ped it; but let him mind how he ever comes within range of old Amos Grindrod's rifle!"

Shem was anxious to know whether the Indian I had shot was quite dead, and what painted device his half-naked body bore. His own glazing eyes could not distinguish; but when I described the yellow ochre barred with white, he said it must be the "Little Owl," one of Mad Buffalo's best warriors. The other Indian was of slighter make, and daubed with black and vermilion. Both were stone dead. Shem asked me, half timidly, if I would be so good as repeat "a bit of Scripture." He had not been much of a chapel-goer, but Ruth had "got religion," and his mother, too, had been "a Christian woman," as he quaintly observed. I knelt beside him and held up his head as I uttered aloud the words of a brief and simple prayer, such as little children are taught to lisp with their innocent lips; and once or twice I heard the husky tones of the dying man

repeat the words. But there was a strong shiver through his frame, and poor Shem Grindrod was dead before the prayer was prayed out.

About an hour later, I rode up to the station, mounted on my own horse, and leading Shem's by the bridle.

"Halloa! pull up, pull up, or I'll plug ye, sure as my name's Bradshaw!" shouted a stern voice through a loophole of the lonely blockhouse. And I saw the long clouded barrel of a frontier rifle pointing in my direction. I halted, of course.

"That's one of our hosses," cried a second voice; "the critter's stole it, I reckon. What is he?"

"I am a friend," I called out; "a traveller from California. Let me come in, and I will explain all."

The garrison held a short but animated debate. One man avowed his belief in the truth of my story, another broadly hinted that I might turn out a "renegade" or "white Indian," that I merely wanted to open the doors of the fortress to my ferocious allies, ambushed somewhere hard by, and that it

would be as well to shoot me, as a provisional act of prudence. But the majority carries the day in America; and, luckily for me, the majority decreed my admission. Loud was the surprise, and sincere the sorrow, with which the little garrison received the news of their comrade's murder. Three of the men caught up such rude tools as they possessed, and, slinging their rifles, prepared to take the "back trail" to the spot where the unfortunate young man's body lay, and where his remains would be hastily laid in earth, after the custom of the frontiers. Another hurried, with all the instinct of discipline, to saddle a horse for the purpose of carrying forward the mail-bag which poor Shem had resigned only with his life. This rider was the most affected of the group, by the melancholy tidings I had brought. He would have preferred to be one of those who were to lay his old associate beneath the prairie turf, but this could not be. He was "next for duty," he said, simply, with tears standing in his hardy eyes. So, he hurried to equip himself and steed for the perilous road. I now ventured, rather timidly and awkwardly, to

prefer my request for the accommodation of fresh relays of horses along the rest of the route, speaking as modestly as I could of my own preservation of the despatches. The men looked puzzled as they scrutinised me and weighed my demand. One of them, he who had taken me for a renegade white in the Indian interest, gave me a piercing glance, and gruffly said, "How do we know he ain't been bamfoozling us with a pack of lies? He may have murdered Shem, ye see, jest to get a remount, and——"

"*You* jest shut up!" thundered, in tones of deep indignation, the rider who was to carry on the mails, "You oughter to be ashamed of that tongue o' yourn, Jethro Summers. Here's a gentleman, and what's more, an honest chap, has fit by poor Shem's side, has saved his scalp from them Shoshonies, and brought on the bag for us, and you're to insult him with your mean talk. See! his hoss is fresh, and he's brought in Shem's hoss; and you to go telling him he'd murder a white Christian to get a lift. It's a burnin' shame, Jeth Summers!"

"'Tis, 'tis!" exclaimed the other two men.

"Did ye ever know a darned renegade look a chap in the face, bold and honest, like the colonel, there? He's a good chap, is mister; and if ever he wants a friend in a rough-and-tumble fight, we're his men, sure as minks can swim."

The trio shook hands with me with genuine warmth. Now, when the iron was hot, was the time to strike. I therefore made an energetic appeal to them to supply me with horses, assuring them that my whole prospects and happiness, as well as those of others, depended on my speed. They listened with interest; but when I concluded with the words, "Shem Grindrod wished it; he bade me ask it of you, as he lay dying," the game was won. To be sure, the one ill-conditioned member of the community grumbled out something about "soft sawder, breach of rules, cunning Yankees, and dismissal." But the tall rider cut him short, by affirming with an oath, that "if the Co. chose to ride nasty on such a point, after the stranger's services, why the Co. was a mean scamp, and he wouldn't serve 'em for one." I did not at first exactly comprehend this frequently-

recurring phrase of the "Co.," and was disposed to regard it as the name of some overlooker, or superintendent, but afterwards discovered that this monosyllabic impersonation meant the Express Company.

"Look sharp, mister. You shall have a mount, but there's time lost a'ready, and we shall have to ride whip and spur. Come and pick a nag out of the corral. There's a brindled mustang your saddle will fit like his skin. The roan's best, but his back's rubbed raw. Ask Jonas to give you some beef and biscuit: we shan't pass many hot-els, that air positive. Charge that revolver o' yourn, colonel; I see two bullets a-missing. Have a horn of whisky—old Monongahela? No! Do be spry with the saddle, you Jeth—a man should help in a case like this. Easy, mister, with the bridle—the mustang bites—so! We'll take care of your nag, and you'll find him as sleek as a slug, if you come back our way. Good-bye, boys!"

So saying, the impatient rider finished his preparations, sprang to his saddle, waved his repeating carbine over his head, and set off at furious speed. I followed as rapidly as I

could, shouting a farewell to those left behind, who were on the point of starting for the place where poor Shem was lying beside the corpses of his copper-hued foes, stiff and stark.

The brindled mustang was fat and lazy, compared with the nimble cream-coloured pony on which my guide was mounted. It took all my exertions to overtake 'Demus Blake, whose name was probably Aristodemus, though thus curtailed by usage. We rode at a tremendous pace.

"Larrup your beast, colonel," cried the rider, "we're woful behind. Don't be stingy with the spur-iron, for that brindle does allays shirk when he can. Mind—'ware the sappy ground, where you see them clubby mosses! Jordan! they'd take a hoss up to the girths, and there you'd stop, like a tree'd coon. Push on, sir. Rattle him across them riv'lets: not that a parara hoss can jump like the critters from the U-nited States."

It struck me that 'Demus Blake was bawling and flogging in this excited way, for no other purpose than to quiet his own nerves, and drown care. I was confirmed in this

view by the fact that, after six or seven miles had been swallowed up by the rapid career of our foam-flecked steeds, the rider reined his horse into a steady hand-gallop.

"There, mister," said he, "we'll go quiet now. I feels kiender easier under my left ribs. Tell'ee, colonel, little as you think it, to look at such as me, I was as near making the biggest baby of myself—there, I was! Poor boy Shem! I knowed him, sir, oncommon well, and oncommon long. We played about together, when we were as high as a ramrod, in Pequottie village, nigh to Utica, in old Kentuck. And when old Amos and my daddy, Jonathan Blake, calculated to move west, they chose the same location. Sad news for old Amos—a white-haired old chap now, but pretty tough, too. He's at Brown's Hole—no, at Round Pond—trading for peltry. I wouldn't care to have the tellin' on him."

The rider was silent for a good while after this. He did not speak again till I paid a merited tribute to Shem's courage. I had found him, I said, fronting seven Indians like a stag at bay. The frontiers-man's eye glittered proudly:

"A brave boy, sir. I was with him, first fight—that is, Shem's first, cause I'm two year an older man. 'Twarnt hereaway. South of Fremont's Pass it war, and bloody Blackfoot Indians war the inimy, three to one, on'y they'd no fire-arms. 'Twarnt child's play that day, mister!" The backwoodsman expanded his broad chest, while his nostrils dilated, and his lips tightened, as he recalled the arduous struggle long past.

He was a much stronger man than Shem, of a spirit less gay and lightsome, but not without a certain amount of rude practical poetry in his disposition. He knew Shem's sweetheart; a very nice-looking girl, of rather a quiet, subdued, and pious nature. "Not too common on the border, nouther, where even gals mostly has a spice of the wild-cat, but, mebbe, that pleased Shem."

Of the distress in store for old Amos Grindrod: a hunter, once renowned for his prowess and skill, whether in warfare or the chase; Blake spoke feelingly and with deep conviction.

"'Twill shorten the old man's days, sir, but it's lucky the old woman's not alive to hear

it: she was that tender of Shem, if his finger ached she'd flutter like a robbed hen. Good old soul she was, Mrs. Grindrod, and nursed my old mother when she took the fever in that murderin' swamp."

Honest 'Demus had too much innate good-breeding to be inquisitive as to the purport of my unusual journey. In this respect, as in some others, he far surpassed in tact and politeness many an accomplished citizen in varnished boots and satin vest. But he offered me some well-meant advice.

"Take it coolly," said he, "and don't flurry yourself, colonel. You've got more colour in your cheeks than need be, and your hand was as hot, when I shook it, as a bit of deer-meat toastin' over the fire. I don't know as you ain't right, shirking the whisky, though 'tis food and comfort to such as me. But a smart touch of fever would tie you by the leg, stranger, so don't fret overly, and sleep all you can. As for Injuns, they'll hardly trouble *two* white men, when there's nouthin' to be got but a kipple of nags that can be bought for a cast of the lasso or larist. The emigrant trains is different, for the Red

devils scent plunder in the waggons, and only the dragoons skear 'em. Twar spite med the Mad Buffalo fall on Shem Grindrod. Shem give him a coat o' tar and turkey feathers one night, at Bridger's Fort, when the Injun got so drunk with whisky some rascal sold him, he lay like a hog on the ground. They never forgive, them Injuns. Shoshonies have no pity, compared to the savages east of the Rocky Mountains. Keep a look out for outlying war parties, mister, when you get to the mountain parks. Crows will take hoss and clothes; Blackfeet allays hanker arter ha'r!"

I took my guide's well-meant advice, and endeavoured to get through the journey as phlegmatically as might be. I snatched every opportunity of repose, if only for a few minutes, while the reeking saddles were being shifted to the backs of fresh horses; and it is wonderful how much refreshment I at times derived from a nap so brief as not much to exceed the traditional "forty winks." More than once, my companion said to me, "Colonel, you're about dropping with sleep. Shut your eyes, if you like, and give me your reins. I'll guide both hosses, and you can't

hardly roll out of that cradle o' yourn." And, indeed, the deep Mexican saddle of demipique cut, which I had luckily provided on starting, was admirably adapted, with its lofty pommel and cantel, to the use of a dozing equestrian. Curious spells of slumber those were, when my head would nod like that of a porcelain mandarin, and my eyelids droop as if weighted with lead, and when, after a few minutes, I would start up, broad awake, as my mustang stumbled over broken ground. Once—it was while 'Demus Blake was still with me—I had a long and most delicious period of slumber, uninterrupted by jerks or concussions; and when I awoke, quite a new man, and revived to an extent at which I now wonder, I found myself supported by the strong patient arm of my conductor, who had been galloping by my side for miles, managing both bridles with his disengaged hand. "I thought it would fresh you up, colonel!" said the brave fellow.

Not all my mentors throughout that phantom ride across prairieland were as frank as Blake, nor as merry as Shem. But the mail-bag riders turned out good fellows in all main

points, and I can safely say that I found but two or three surly or ill-natured persons among all those who garrisoned the block-houses: while fortunately it fell to my lot on no occasion to be accompanied by one of these. In the prairie, as in the world at large, I found good-feeling the rule, cynicism or malice the exception, though I am bound to say that the ill-conditioned individuals made twice as much noise and stir as their more amiable mates. The first start had been difficult, but at each succeeding station I received my remount without much delay or parley. The "privilege of the post" was conceded to me, while I was always welcome to a share of the rations in each little community. On the whole, I found the men cheerful in their strange isolation. They were liberally paid and not ill-fed, and they looked forward to a pension in the event of becoming crippled by some Indian hatchet-stroke or arrow-shot. Planted in the wilderness, with the prospect of being presently encompassed by deep drifts of snow, over whose frozen surface the wolves would come to howl and scratch at their doors, like dogs

seeking admittance, they were in fair spirits and undismayed. Their habitual talk was of the wild adventures that formed the every-day life of that frontier of Christendom; of Indian stratagems and cruelty, of panthers and "grizzlies," pronghorns and buffaloes. Several of them had consorted familiarly with the painted tribes of the desert, and spoke sundry Indian dialects as fluently as their mother tongue. I found these hardy men kind hosts enough; they would hush their talk, not to disturb me as I lay down on a heap of skins and blankets, to sleep, while the guide saddled the horses; and they soon ceased to ridicule my apparently capricious refusal of whisky. "Mebbe the colonel's right!" (Colonel is the Western title of courtesy), they would say in their blunt politeness. Once I found the inmates of a station, built on swampy ground, quite helpless and prostrate with fever. The fever had abated when the healthy norther began to blow, but the poor fellows were cramped with pains, and very feeble, and only one of the party could crawl about to cook and feed the fire. I had need to fix my mind on the

reward of success, on the distant goal glittering far ahead, for it was no light task that I had undertaken. The thought of Emma nerved me, and I felt an Englishman's dogged resolve to win, to fight on, and to break sooner than bend. But the fatigues of that journey surpassed all my conceptions. By day and night, under a glaring sun or through the frost and cutting northerly winds, on we pressed, fording streams, threading the way through marshes, stumbling among the burrows of prairie dogs, or dashing across boundless plains. I almost learned to hate the long terraces of turf, the illimitable sweeps of dark green surface, the blue horizons, the swells of gently sloping earth, smooth enough for the passage of wheeled carriages. On we went, till the long grass, mixed with flowers and wild tufts of the flax-cotton, gave place to a shorter and crisper herbage, the true "buffalo grass" that the bisons love; or till water became scarce, and the sage plant replaced the blossomed shrubs of the west, and the springs were brackish, and here and there our horses' hoofs went cranching over a white stretch of desert,

strewn with crystals of salt that glittered in the sun. We saw little of Indians, and of game still less. The latter, my guides told me, had been chiefly scared away, by the constant passage of emigrants. As for the savages, we sometimes saw the plumed heads, the tapering lances, and the fluttering robes, of a troop of wild horsemen, against the crimson sky of evening; but they offered us no molestation, and the riders said they were Utahs on the look-out for "buffler droves" returning from the south. Of the fatigue of that interminable ride, the aching joints, the stiffened sinews, the pains that racked my overstrained muscles, I can give no just idea. Still less can I convey any sense of the continual strain upon the intellect and perceptive faculties, or how my brain grew as weary as my limbs.

I shall never forget the evening of my arrival in Salt Lake City, the capital of Utah territory, and New Jerusalem of the Mormons. I had been encouraged by the guides, to look upon this town in the deserts as a turning-point in the journey, beyond which I should be in less peril from Indians, and after which

a comparatively short ride would carry me to more civilised regions. But, to my surprise, I found the inmates of the station at Salt Lake City quite as lonely as, and more suspicious and moody than, in the far-off posts among the prairies. They were Gentiles in the midst of a fanatic population, wholly swayed by the hierarchy of that strange creed, whose standard had been set up in the lawless wastes of the west. Nor was it long before I heard the cause of their dark looks and low spirits.

"Where's Josh Hudson?" asked the rider who had come with me, when the first greetings had been exchanged.

"Who knows?" answered the man addressed; "*I* don't. Seth said he went to the town, while I were in the corral with the hosses. If so, all I can say is, he never come back."

"When was that, Seth?" asked the newly-arrived rider.

"Two days agone," answered Seth, as he scraped the surface of a half-exhausted quid of tobacco with his long sharp bowie-knife, "jest afore sundown."

"He's not desarted. Josh was too honourable to make tracks, that way," said the rider, confidently.

"Desarted! Not he. But that's what'll have to be put in the report—leastways, missin'," said Seth.

The rider looked Seth in the face, and drew his forefinger, with a meaning look, slowly across his own throat. Seth nodded.

"Least said, safest," said Seth, looking dubiously at me,

"Colonel's safe. You may speak afore him, same as myself, boys!" cried the mail-bag rider, who had come with me; "do ye mean them bloodthirsty Mormons——?"

"Whist, Jem! Whew! You'll get all our throats cut," cried the oldest man, starting up in great alarm; "there may be one of the brutes within earshot." He looked through the window, and opened the door, to satisfy himself that no eavesdroppers were near.

"I forgot," apologised Jem; "but about Josh Hudson?"

"I'm afeard," answered Seth, in a voice dropped almost to a whisper, "that he's gone

for good. Josh was troubled about his sister, Nell Hudson, that jined the Mormons last winter, up in Illinoy, and was coaxed off, and is here, somewhere."

"Ah," said the listener, "I've heerd as much."

"It's my belief," continued Seth, "that Josh got on this station a purpose to seek the gal out, and get her to go home to the old folks and the Church she were bred in. Mormons won't stand that."

"Ah!" said the guide Jem again.

"So, in short, Seth and me some think, we do," said the oldest of the group, "that Josh has been at his scoutin' onst too often, and met 'shanpip.'"

"Shanpip!" I repeated, "what is that?"

The man eyed me curiously. "Never heerd of 'Shanpip brethren,' then, harn't ye, mister? So much the best for you. P'raps you've heerd tell of Danites?"

I *had* heard, vaguely and obscurely, of that spiritual police of Mormondom, of those fierce zealots who obey their Prophet blindly.

"Then you have reason to fear that your comrade is——"

"Is lyin' under the salt mud of one o' them briny pools nigh to hand," interrupted the man, "and not alone, nouther. Theer's been a many missin' that never went back to settlements nor on to Californey. And theer they'll lie hid, I reckon, till the Day of Judgment, when Great Salt Lake shall give up its dead, like the rest of the airth and waters."

I asked if an appeal could not be made to the Mormon elders themselves?

"'Twouldn't answer, colonel. Suppose I goes to-morrow to Brigham's own house, or Kimball's, or any of their big men—elders, or angels, or high priests, or what not—and asks after Josh Hudson. Brigham's very mealy-mouthed, afraid the man's run away; what could be expected from a benighted Gentile, and that; gives his own account of it in preachment next Sabbath. P'raps one of 'em gives me a glass of wine or a julep, and mebbe it disagrees with me, and I die of it. You may stare, but didn't the States treasurer die that way, arter takin' refreshment at Angel Badger's house? And a pretty angel *he* be. P'raps I don't drink under a Mormon roof, and then, mebbe, I walk home late, and

lose my way, or some other accident happens me—true as death, mister, on'y last week, as I passed Big Lick, I saw a dead woman's face looking up at me, all white and still, at bottom of the salt pool."

Thus far the elder man had spoken, but now Seth, who had evinced great uneasiness, jumped up with an oath, and cautiously opened the door. No one was listening.

"Tell'ee what," said Seth, "we'd best keep this discoorse close, till we're outside the territory. They're that sharp, Mormons, blessed if I don't think they're all ear. And if they get's a notion what we're sayin', the colonel won't never see New York, and I shan't never happen home to Montgomery agin. Indian Walker and his pesky Utahs mostly got a knack of tomahawking them as Mormons don't much like. And mebbe we'd meet other Indians, with blankets and red paint on their faces, jest like the real Utahs, and pretty sharp knives in their belts."

"Seth's right," said my former guide; "we don't want to set up any chaps to paint Injun on our account, as Angel Brown and Young Harris and the Danites did, when Martha

Styles and Rachel Willis chose to go home to Illinoy—so, colonel, you get a snooze, and Seth, you needn't hurry about saddlin'—we've rode awful quick."

I was not sorry when day-dawn found me, after a hard gallop by moonlight, approaching the confines of the Mormon territory. The rest of the journey was unmarked by adventure. Hardships there were, but no great perils. We traversed a route on which the bleached bones of many horses and mules lay white and ghastly, and on which many a low turfen mound marked the last resting-place of an emigrant, or his wife or child, never to reach the Promised Land of Hope.

But provisions were more plentiful now, and water more regularly stored and easy of access, than when the expelled Mormons made their famous march across the desert, marking the untrodden route with graves. We narrowly escaped being smothered in the snow, in passing the outlet in the Rocky Mountains, and this was our last semblance of peril.

Previous to this, it had been my sad duty to tell old Amos Grindrod, whom I found at

the Round Pond Station, of his son's death, and to commit to his care the bit of ensanguined ribbon that was to be returned to poor Shem's sweetheart. The old man tried to bear the tidings with the stoicism of those Indians among whom he had passed so much of his life, and expressed great pleasure at hearing that Shem had "died like a Kentucky man, clear grit," and that I had come up in time to save his scalp. But in a few minutes, nature conquered. The old man's bronzed features worked and twitched, and tears trickled from his aged eyes, as he sobbed out, "Shem! dear boy, Shem! 'twas I that oughter be dead, not he."

At last the weary ride was over: we had passed outlying farms guarded by a strong stockade, then the farms grew thicker and the stockades were dispensed with, and at last the roofs of a village, called by courtesy a town, came in view. Gladly did I dismount, gladly did I shake the hard hand of the last rider of the Express Company! Leaving that honest fellow puzzling over the cabalistic flourishes of a ten-dollar note I presented to him, I hired a pair-horse waggon of light build, and

set off at once. The waggon bore me on until I exchanged it for a coach, the coach did me the same good office until I heard the snort of the steam-horse, and took my ticket by railway. How delicious, how snug and luxurious was such a mode of travel, after so much hard saddlework! Corduroy roads seemed smooth, and American railroads not in the least addicted to cause the trains to jerk or rock. The gliding motion was charming, and I made amends for lost time, by sleeping in a manner which provoked more than one fellow-traveller, eager to know my business and station in life.

I had already telegraphed to New York briefly thus:

"Has the Californian mail, viâ Panama, arrived?"

Briefer still was the answer:

"No."

That was right, so far. My toil was not yet purposeless. I might hope to be in New York before Dr., or Colonel, Joram Heckler. The victory, to be sure, was not yet won. The valuable papers remained in the scoundrel's keeping. But my presence in New

York would be unsuspected by him, and any overt act on my part would have the effect of a surprise. I was too exhausted, to devote myself to spinning air-drawn schemes for outwitting the intriguer. I should have need of all my faculties when the tug of war began, and I must sleep now. Sleep I did, over miles and miles, over leagues and leagues, of the iron way: resting obstinately, and being as passive as possible.

"Massa get out? Dis New York, sare."

Some one was shaking me by the arm: some one else held a lantern to my face. A black man and a white. The conductor, and a negro porter.

"I'm going to the Metropolitan Hotel. I want a hack: no luggage. Has the Californian mail arrived?"

"Yes, it has," said a newsvendor, who stood by, with a heap of journals under his arm; "got all the news here. Herald, Tribune, Times. Which will you have?"

I bought one of the papers, and glanced at the list of arrivals, viâ Panama. So much gold dust, so much bullion, distinguished European traveller, postmaster-general, Sig-

nora Cantatini, Colonels Thom, Heckler, &c. The driver of the hack-carriage was an Irishman, as usual, and luckily, not a new arrival. He readily conducted me (at that late hour all other stores and shops were closed) to the emporium of a Jew dealer in ready-made clothes, who was willing to turn a cent even at irregular time. I purchased a new suit, linen, a portmanteau, and so forth, and shaved off my stubbly beard with razors supplied by the Jew, and before the Jew's private looking-glass. My driver drove quite a trim, ordinary-looking gentleman to the Metropolitan Hotel, instead of the shaggy flannel-shirted Californian who had first engaged him.

Before I engaged a room, I civilly asked the bookkeeper to let me look at the addresses of guests; I was expecting my brother, I said, from Albany. I took good care to say nothing of Heckler or California, and the bookkeeper had no suspicion that my voyages had commenced at any more remote spot than Philadelphia or Baltimore. Yes—Heckler's name was down.

I had guessed he would put up at the

Metropolitan, for I had heard him mention the house approvingly in conversation. I hung about the bar and the staircases until I happened to hear that he had gone to bed. Then, I withdrew to think over my own plan of operations. I own I was puzzled. I tossed and tumbled uneasily on my pillow. While hurrying onward it had appeared as if I had but to arrive in time, and the difficulty was at an end; but now, what was I to do? The battle had yet to be fought. What *should* I do? In the morning, no doubt, Heckler would repair to the bank to present the forged cheque, if not to get the bills discounted. I must stop him. But how? Should I go to the police, and return with the police myrmidons? Not to be thought of! Scandal, exposure must follow such a step; nay, in the eyes of the law, Heckler might see man innocent man, and I a false accuser. I next thought of confronting him boldly, and forcing from him, with a pistol at his head, if need be, the property of the firm. But this was too Quixotic a proceeding to be adopted in a first-rate hotel in New York. I was at my wits' end.

Heavens! What a smell of burning, and how stifling and thick the air! Smoke! The house is on fire. Up I sprang, and flung on my clothes in hot haste. "It's an ill wind that blows no one any good." I thought of Joram Heckler as I rang my bell to alarm the people.

"Fire! fire!" The awful cry broke upon the ears of the sleepers, like the trump of doom. Dark clouds of volleying smoke poured along the corridors, flecked here and there by thin ribbons of flame that licked the walls and floors like the tongues of fiery serpents. Shrieks were heard; doors were burst open; men, women, children, rushed out, half-dressed and screaming. There was panic terror and wild confusion. The fire gained ground, the smoke was blindingly thick, and all fled before it—all but myself. I steadily groped my way towards Joram Heckler's room. I knew the number, and where to find it. I knew that I risked my life, but the stake was worth winning at such a risk. I was very nearly suffocated as I pushed on, holding by the wall, into the thickest of the smoke. Some man, half-

dressed, and winged by fear, came rushing by with extended arms, and nearly overturned me. He uttered a savage oath; the red glare of the fire fell on his face; it was Joram Heckler.

He did not recognise me, but dashed on, only mindful of his danger. Had he the papers with him? I thought not. I hoped not. That was *his* room then, the door of which was ajar, and into which the smoke was rolling. Not the smoke alone; I saw a thin red tongue of fire creeping in over the floor, beside the wainscot. I dashed in. My eyes smarted with the smoke, and I gasped for breath, but smoke and fire could not turn me now. Heckler's clothes and dressing-case were as he had laid them; the latter was open: no papers! His valise, too, lay open: no papers! I struck my forehead despairingly. He had them about him then! I was risking life idly. Emma was lost to me! The smoke choked me: the intolerably hot fire had gained the bed: valance and curtains were flaring high in a tall yellow pillar of flame. The subtle tongues of flame almost touched my feet. I must fly, if I

would not perish. Outside, I heard the noise of the engines and the cheers of the mob, and then the dash of water, as prodigious efforts were made to extinguish the fire.

I was staggering away, when I saw, peeping from under the bolster of the bed, a Russia-leather pocket-book. The rascal had forgotten it in his blind terror. The blazing curtains fell in fragments upon me, and my hands were a good deal scorched, but I rescued the precious prize. I tore it open. Yes, cheque and bills, all were there! Thrusting it into my breast-pocket, I left the room, and struggled as I best could down the passage. Dash after dash of water, flung from hand-buckets, had partially subdued the flames, and the firemen were gaining the victory. Half smothered, singed, blackened, but with a proudly beating heart, I forced my way down the heated and crowded staircase—reached the outer air, and fainted.

I have little more to tell. I am a partner in the firm: Emma is my wife; her brother recovered from his illness, and is now, in another land, an altered and penitent man. The house of Spalding, Hausermann, and Co.

(I am Co.) have granted a pension to the poor girl who was to have been the bride of the luckless Shem Grindrod. Of Heckler we heard no more.

A TUTOR'S STORY.

I AM by profession a tutor. Carefully educated, and of a studious disposition from the first, I had been designed by my father for the bar, but his commercial misfortunes, followed by ruin and death, had compelled me to leave the university without even the barren advantage of a degree. Fit to teach, and fit, as discerning friends unanimously declared, for nothing else under the sun, I was induced to apply such abilities as I possessed to the task of tuition. Having passed some years in this calling: now assistant master in a school: now "coach" to a party of young Oxonians or Cantabs reading through a vacation spent in Wales or Cumberland: I at length found myself in want of an engagement. None of my old pupils or sur-

viving relatives could assist me in this strait, and I at last determined to apply to one of the more reputable of those agents who profess to facilitate both the obtaining of situations and the choice of competent persons to fill them. I paid my fees, was duly entered by name in some enormous ledgers, and for several weeks was a punctual caller at the office, which was near Oxford-street, but without success. I seldom visited Mr. Hudson's—this was the agent's name—without seeing other applicants, sad-eyed and dejected, sent empty away. And I began to regard the whole system as a snare and a delusion.

"I will call yet this once," said I one muggy autumn day, as I turned into Oxford-street with my umbrella, "yet this once, and if the usual answer is returned, I will trouble Mr. Hudson no more, but will accept the post of usher in that school at Northampton."

The office was empty of all but the clerk, posted behind his monstrous books, in a sort of mahogany cage. Of him I made, though with little hope of a favourable answer, the customary inquiry; "anything for Mr. Edwin Kirby?"

"Kirby," said the clerk, rustling the leaves of a ledger, and referring to the K's, with an irritating pretence of never having seen me before: "Kirby—Edwin, I think you said? Was it Edwin, or Edward?"

I nearly lost my temper at this. I had besieged the office for weeks, and here was this man, not merely forgetting me, which was pardonable, but talking as if he had a legion of Kirbys—not a very common name—entered on his books. Very opportunely his employer, who lay ensconced in some hidden recess, like a human spider, intervened.

"Don't worry the gent, Bruce. I told you I'd see him when he called, and I've got something for him."

Mr. Hudson came wriggling out from his den, rubbing his hands and congratulating me with a warmth which seemed to savour of surprise. Perhaps it was not every day that the wealthier portion of the public consulted the office as to the filling up of such posts as they had to bestow.

"This is bonny fide, mind," said the agent, holding up a dirty forefinger. "I've as good

as fixed the gentleman for you, and you can have an interview any day before three, at Ducrocq's Hotel."

"Ducrocq's?" repeated I, rather puzzled; for I knew the hotel to be a fashionable one, chiefly patronised by foreign visitors to London, whose rank or fortune made them shrink from Leicester Square.

"Yes; the party is a foreign party. Rich, I believe. He's a markis, and he wants a tutor for his only son. Salary's the only thing, Mr. Kirby, I can't tell you about; but I'll go to the hotel and introduce you tomorrow, if you like."

Mr. Hudson's information was accurate. The French gentleman in want of an instructor for his only son was really the Marquis de Vauxmesnil, a rich landed proprietor in one of the central departments. The salary he offered was one which, had salary been my chief object, I should have owned to be liberal. The manner in which his tutor was to be treated at his château was kind and handsome. I might have my own suite of rooms, M. de Vauxmesnil said, and dine alone or with the family exactly as I pleased. If I

cared about riding, a horse should be at my disposal. My time out of school-hours, was my own. So far, so good, and indeed I had never dreamed of such privileges; but there were some things which puzzled me. The marquis was perfectly polite, and yet I was rather repelled than attracted by his courtesy. He was a tall and handsome man, in spite of his dyed hair; but there was a curl in his lip when he spoke, more like a sneer than a smile, and his voice had an imperious accent, as of one who had pampered his pride until it was a passion. There were traces of other passions, in the crow's feet and wrinkles about his keen dark eyes and firm mouth, and his complexion was so pale as to be colourless. Why had he come to England in search of a tutor? Why apply to an agency? Why, indeed, did he want a tutor at all, if his son were, as he told me, hardly eight years old: an age at which boys are generally left under female superintendence?

I am unskilful, I know, in hiding my thoughts. The marquis read them with ease.

"My dear sir," he said, taking snuff from a little gold box, which he handled with all

the foppish grace of the old régime, "I see you are dying to know why I have come for a tutor to your foggy capital—excuse me—and whether I am what I profess to be, or an adventurer masquerading in the title of marquis. Reassure yourself. I am neither a Monte Christo nor a chevalier of industry. As to my wanting to place my child so early, under a tutor, that is my affair; it is my idea that education cannot begin too soon. As for my preference for an Englishman, it is briefly this—I cannot easily find a Frenchman of learning who is not imbued with horrible revolutionary principles, unless I take an ecclesiastic, to which course I also object. Therefore, I choose an Englishman, and prefer that he should teach my child your barbarous pronunciation of Latin—pardon me—than that Henri should learn to lisp the cant of the Jacobins."

All this, of course, was said in French, which I fortunately happened to be pretty conversant with; but it was an unknown tongue to Mr. Hudson, the agent. The marquis, however, found English words enough to inform my introducer that the result of the

interview was satisfactory, and he begged me to favour him by leaving my testimonials with him for a day or two, until his final answer should be given. For my part, I was referred to a member of the French embassy for any information I might desire respecting the position of M. de Vauxmesnil.

I did apply in the quarter indicated, and all the statements of the marquis were fully confirmed: with the addition that M. de Vauxmesnil had been a peer of France under the Orleans reign, and enjoyed the post of senator under the existing government.

"Ma foi! a superior man," added the young attaché, with one of those shrugs that say so much; "a man eminent in every sense of the word, but not of our century. There is no love lost between the government and M. de Vauxmesnil."

The political squabbles of France were no concern of mine, and I gladly closed with the liberal proposals of the marquis. During the journey to his country seat, which was on the banks of the Rhône, a short distance below Lyons, I had ample opportunity for estimating the character of my employer. He

was a man who had had the irreparable misfortune to be born some hundred years too late, for his sympathies and tastes were wholly absorbed in a bygone state of things, and his life had been spent in useless struggles to put back the hands of the clock of time. He was not precisely a bad man, but he contrived to do more harm and to provoke more antipathies than many who were worse than himself. He treated me well and civilly, but I could see that in his ideas there was a great gulf between us, never to be bridged, and that a Brahmin could as easily believe a Sudra his equal, as the Marquis de Vaux-mesnil could regard Edwin Kirby in that light. Once or twice I had my doubts whether I were doing wisely in burying myself in a lonely château in a foreign country; in turning my back, so to speak, on the nineteenth century, and becoming the stipendiary of an obstinate grand seigneur. But my prospects in England had been dark enough, and I had little choice.

"Welcome, M. Kirby," said the marquis, at last; "welcome to Rochaigue!"

The train had just come jarringly to a halt

at a small station. On the right hand, foamed the Rhône; on the left, shot up a sharp and jagged rock, rising to a point like the spire of a Gothic cathedral; and on a platform of this rock stood the castle—a very imposing structure, especially at a first glance. The village, with its grey stone houses and avenue of walnut-trees, nestled below; and the well-wooded and broken country on one bank, and the green meadows on the other, made up a pleasant prospect.

We quitted the train, and reclaimed our luggage. A carriage was waiting: not, as I had half expected, a coach and six, with triple file of powdered lacqueys: but one of those roomy shapeless vehicles, fitted with a light roof, and drawn by two long-tailed La Perche nags, commonly used by rich residents in the south. The coachman, in laced coat and flat cap, clambered on to a little pyramid of our portmanteaus and hat-boxes; the marquis's valet, who had been with him to England, climbed up beside him, and sat more comfortably on the box; the whip cracked, and we set off at a round trot. As we passed through the village many hats and caps flew

off in honour of the rich proprietor, but I saw few or no smiles of genuine welcome. M. de Vauxmesnil returned all these salutes affably.

"I am bon prince," he said, with one of his faint smiles. "So long as no idea-mongers come between us, my tenants and I get on reasonably well. What do you think of Rochaigue?"

"Splendid!" was my involuntary exclamation. Indeed, from the point to which we had attained in our winding ascent, the old castle looked grand and majestic. On a nearer approach I could see that much of this splendour faded into nothing. Great part of the building was in ruins—a mere shell; the towers were broken, the walls breached, and the white modern house that clung to the shattered pile appeared smaller than it really was by contrast with its neighbour.

The marquis smiled bitterly as he observed my look of unconscious disappointment.

"Yes," said he, "Rochaigue has seen its best days, like its master. Yonder, where you see the burnt beams, stood the gallery where the king—pshaw! what do you care

for such old-world memories, monsieur? I dare say you would rather see a good dinner, now, than all the ruins on earth. So should I have thought, at your age. We are arrived."

My life at the château was somewhat monotonous, but decidedly not an unhappy one. The marquise, with the little boy, my pupil, and a sister of M. de Vauxmesnil, a quiet prim person, made up the family circle. Madame de Vauxmesnil was much younger than her husband—a pale gentle woman, with fair hair and kind grey eyes that had something mournful and timid in them. Very likely the match between those two had been made up, as French marriages often are, by busy relatives, and without much regard for the wishes and inclinations of poor Mademoiselle Louise. She was very obedient and subdued, not over cheerful, seldom well. The child, on the other hand, was really a noble little fellow, with chesnut hair curling in heavy natural rings, a clear healthy red and white complexion, and the frankest blue eyes in the world. A fine little fellow, with good abilities, so far as I could judge, and giving

promise of a high spirit and a sweet temper —rare but enviable combination. It is not surprising that the little Henri—his father's christian names were Gaston Pierre Louis Armand Henri, after the fashion of the Faubourg St. Germain—was the idol of his parents, and that he stood as fair a chance of being spoiled as ever boy did.

There are some natures, however, which even flattery and indulgence seem unable to corrupt, and such was that of my little pupil the tiny viscount, as he had been called while still in the cradle: the eldest son of the Marquis de Vauxmesnil possessing that rank. His father wished his education to be conducted on as nearly as possible the system that had been in vogue before the Revolution. He did not, to be sure, insist upon my teaching the young heir the history of his native land through the medium of that veracious chronicle of the Abbé Labeille, much esteemed in clerical schools, and which represents Austerlitz and Marengo as victories gained by a certain Marquis de Bonaparte, "general of the armies of the king." The scholastic works whose use were enjoined upon me were not

such transparent traps for blindfolding the intellect. But they had been carefully selected, and were from the pens of men who viewed the progress of our age with fear and dislike, and who availed themselves of modern discoveries to hamper and embarrass the march of public opinion. The object of M. de Vaux-mesnil was no secret.

"A gentleman," he used to say, "should not be ignorant of what is known to all the canaille of the cities. For my own part, I value your wonderful nineteenth century and its boasts, your steam, gas, and electricity, at less than a pinch of snuff. But Henri must not grow up unacquainted with all these material phenomena which it is the trick of the time to praise and to study. I was a page to Louis the Eighteenth, and we had something else to talk of then, than your science and your improvements. Gentlemen were gentlemen, in those days, my good M. Kirby."

Fortunately for me, the marquis had a high appreciation of the classics. The study of Horace and Cicero was to his taste, and had been sanctioned by the approval of the Grand Monarque, and he therefore encouraged his

youthful son to devote much time to the dead languages. I say fortunately for me, because in helping little Henri through the Latin grammar, my way was clear before me, and I had none of the perplexities which beset me when natural science and history were under discussion. Then, indeed, my pupil often puzzled me by asking questions which it was hardly possible to answer in accordance at once with truth and with his parent's wishes. Children, when even moderately intelligent, have a restless curiosity and a talent for cross-examination, worthy of a procureur impérial; and Henri frequently perplexed me by pointed inquiries which it was scarcely within my power to answer or evade. The boy's nature was singularly frank and noble; there was a true chivalry in it, of which his father's disposition, with all its superficial gloss and glitter, possessed little or nothing. I felt assured that Henri de Vauxmesnil had only to know what was right, to act on that knowledge, without reference to sacrifice of self or prejudices. And I often thought with apprehension of the day when the young heir, arrived at man's estate, would find himself

radically at variance with his father on some social or political question.

For, it was impossible that Henri should be always content to look at the broad noonday world through a pair of mediævally-tinted spectacles. Anything might open his eyes, any accident might reveal to him the actual condition of Europe, and enlist his sympathies on the side most opposed to the stubborn prejudices of his parent. As for myself, my position sometimes caused me considerable uneasiness. My own opinions were those which I shared with the majority of my countrymen, of whatever class, and were naturally heterodox in the eyes of my employer. It would have been a gross breach of duty had I imparted to my young charge, facts and theories which his father abhorred; but, on the other hand, my conscience did not permit me to paint things in false colours—to blacken white, or whiten black. I tried to be neutral, to act a purely negative part, and for some time I succeeded tolerably well, but the effort was far from agreeable. Meanwhile, my little pupil became fond of his English tutor, and I had no cause to complain of

want of kindness from any member of the household.

The Marquise de Vauxmesnil had not, I fancy, been consulted as to my engagement. She was always gentle and polite, but I imagined that she objected to me as a foreigner and a Protestant: while her husband more than once hinted that her desire had been that little Henri's education should be conducted by a priest.

"But that," said the marquis, in his sprightly way, "was out of the question. Certainly the Church is to be supported, but it would bore me frightfully to have a calotin under my roof, though my wife, poor dear creature, believes that every soutane covers an angel. No! I do not wish the boy to grow up awkward and silly, with a spice of cunning mixed with much ignorance. I am of the counsel of M. de Voltaire, himself a pupil of the Jesuits."

That was true. The marquis was an odd mixture of the eighteenth-century philosopher, and the political partisan of the Church. His speeches in the senate were bitter and violent, full of ultramontane feeling and spleen, but he

made no pretence of being devout or even reverent when out of the tribune. He was an active opponent of the existing government; was often in Paris, where he used his whole influence for the Legitimist party; was constantly in correspondence with the exiled Bourbons, and always busy in weaving some cobweb conspiracy to annoy, if he could not overturn, the actual authorities of his country.

Life at the château was dull enough. A very few great people, who lived a long way off, would sometimes drive solemnly along the poplar-fringed roads, to dine at Rochaigue, to play old-fashioned games at cards, and discuss new events by the light of old politics. But there were not many persons left in the department who were considered worthy the honour of admission to the formal saloons of the Vauxmesnil family. Titled names, indeed, abounded in the province, but some fatal flaw attached itself to most of them. Such and such a count was ineligible, as a Bonapartist son, or grandson of one of Napoleon's rough soldiers of fortune; this baron was an Orleanist; that baron was a flatterer of the

imperial master of the Tuileries; while the rest were hobereaux or French squireens, or were descended from pitiful farmers of the revenue, dishonest stewards, or wily notaries of the old régime. So, except the old Prince de Pontanec, the Duke and Duchess of Rohan-Bournon, and four or five other families whose nobility was as ancient as that of the Vauxmesnils, hardly any visitors crossed the threshold.

I was fond of sitting with my volume or my sketch-book, on the summit of the ruined keep, which commanded a splendid view. The elevation was considerable; the air, even in sultry weather, was generally, at that height, refreshed by a breeze; and it was pleasant to look down over the broad country, the distant mountains, and the wide river specked with barge and steam-boat. I was there, one day, with my drawing apparatus before me, and little Henri by my side, and the marquis was walking slowly to and fro on the terrace beneath—a favourite promenade of his—conning some speech which he intended to "fulminate" in the senate. The day was a peculiarly fine and bright one, with a brisk

breeze stirring, and through the clear air the mountains looked nearer than usual, and showed new tints and fantastic forms of precipice and glen. I worked vigorously at my sketch, and the child looked on with his great solemn eyes. He was in an inquisitive mood that day.

"Mr. Kirby," said the little fellow, "whom do those meadows belong to? There where the cows are grazing, below the vineyards?"

I told him to his papa, but was rather surprised when he rejoined:

"But the country yonder, across the river, towards those hills you are drawing, does not belong to papa, does it?"

I answered in the negative.

"And yet it did."

"How do you know that, Henri?" I asked. I was surprised at the boy's knowledge. My own had been gained from the accidental study of an old map of the estate, in which the confiscated possessions of the family had been carefully scored off with red ink. I was aware that the lands remaining to the marquis were but a fourth of the great property owned by his forefathers, but I had been careful not

to arouse feelings of discontent in the child's innocent mind by any hints on the subject.

"Old Pierre, the gardener, told me," said the boy, looking forth into the distance. "Those were the revolutionists that took the lands away; the same who burnt the gallery and the chapel here, and made the castle so ruinous. Why did they do so, monsieur? Were they not very wicked men?"

It was an awkward question. How was I to explain to this child that feudal tyranny and court vice had brought about a dire retribution? How was I to tell him that there were faults—black and bitter faults—on both sides, and that the guiltless had suffered for the guilty?

But before I could frame a discreet answer, an eldritch laugh, harsh as the cry of the screech-owl, broke upon our ears, and made us both start. I looked hastily round, and so did Henri, for the sound seemed to proceed from among the ruins. To my surprise I caught sight of what seemed to be a human form; but so small and fantastically arrayed as to resemble a huge ape rather than a woman. Yet a woman it was, dwarfish,

bowed, and draped in a short red cape, blotched by stains of rough weather, and over which her long grey hair hung in tangled masses. A woman with a face hideous and wrinkled enough to have looked upon the wickedness and woe of a hundred years, but with bright malignant eyes in whose sparkle there was none of the bleared dimness peculiar to extreme age.

"I know her. I have seen her before—the Cape Rouge!" cried the child. Meanwhile, the old hag mopped and mowed, and shook her skinny finger at us, and mumbled out a cackling laugh.

"She is crazed, of course, poor creature," said I. Though I spoke in English, and to myself, the old woman guessed my meaning, for her moans instantly changed into a shrill laugh.

"Ah! ah! Mon beau monsieur, you think so too, do you?" were the words that reached me. "Wait and see; wait and see. And you, pretty child, does the curse weigh on you, my——?" Here the lunatic, or whatever, she was, ceased abruptly, and vanished so noiselessly and quickly among the ruins,

that it almost seemed as if she had melted into air.

Next moment the stately step of the marquis was heard ascending the stone steps. I have no doubt the old crone's ears had caught the sound some seconds before I did, and that the approach of the lord of the castle had cut short her warning or her malediction.

"The owls are noisy to-day," said the marquis, taking snuff from his precious little bijou of a box.

The owls! Doubtless M. de Vauxmesnil had heard that strange cry without distinguishing that it came from human lips, nor did either the little boy or myself breathe a word regarding the weird figure in the stained red mantle.

I took an early opportunity of asking Pierre, the old gardener, the meaning of the apparition. The old man seemed rather disturbed by my question, for he leant heavily on his spade, and devoutly crossed himself, as he said, "Holy St. Catherine! Has *she* been here again. That bodes bad luck."

"But who is she?" I asked, a little impatiently.

"Not know the Cape Rouge! Ah, pardon! I forgot monsieur's quality of foreigner. Well, sir, they call her Red Cape because of the mantle she wears, but her true name is the Mère Chardon—Marie Chardon—and she lives in a little hut among the stones by the river, all alone. As for her age, who can tell it? I have heard my father say that when he was young the Cape Rouge always looked as old, and as wrinkled, and as grey as to-day. But, one thing is sure, her presence bodes no good."

With some difficulty I elicited from the gardener that this old crone was believed to have been an eye-witness of the Revolution, and a sharer in its wild frenzy. She was reported to have joined in the dance of the Carmagnole around the scaffold at Lyons, when the dismal guillotine was plied in the suburb of the Croix Rousse, until the knife was notched and blunted, and the headsmen's arms were weary with hauling at cord and pulley, and the yelling mob had grown hoarse. She was mixed up, traditionally,

with the attack and conflagration of the Château de Rochaigue, and there were vague rumours of some great wrong that had been done to her or hers by a former seigneur of the castle, and which had been thus avenged.

"Certain it is, sir, that though the Cape Rouge hates all the noblesse, she hates our master and his family worst of all, and never speaks of the Vauxmesnils but with a curse. She has seldom appeared here, and never but as the precursor of sorrow, the saints be with us!"

I tried to laugh the old man out of his superstitious apprehensions, but in vain. He shook his head, and overwhelmed me with melancholy facts gathered from the storehouse of his memory. The Cape Rouge had appeared just one week before the younger sister of the marquis had sickened of a fever which carried her off on the very day fixed for the wedding. On the morning of the day when M. de Vauxmesnil's uncle, from whom he had inherited the title and property, was shot in a duel at Paris, the fatal red cape had fluttered among the ruins. And, again, when

the great process was lost, by which the marquis failed to re-establish his fallen fortunes, and when the political earthquake happened which deprived the Vauxmesnils of place and power, the same evil-omened visitor had haunted the château.

That Pierre Ducosse, gardener, and ex-corporal in the Garde Royale of Charles the Tenth, should believe in the supernatural powers and malignity of the Mère Chardon, was not wonderful; but I was surprised to find that the priest of the village in some degree shared his opinions. This priest, M. Tonot, came often to the château, and was always welcomed, though less in his spiritual capacity than as a healer of bodily ailments. It is not unusual for a curé, especially in remote and poor places, to possess a smattering of medicine; and as the parish did not boast a doctor, M. Tonot's simple lore was in frequent request. There was a surgeon in a neighbouring commune, to be sure, and good medical attendance was of course procurable from Lyons; but the marquis had an odd antipathy to doctors—the "trumpeters of revolution," he styled them—and so the curé

had to prescribe alike for the feeble health of the marquise and for the infantine ailments of the young heir. I liked M. Tonot very well. He was a tall stout portly man, with a wholesome florid face, and honest common-place mind, and a deep quiet sense of duty. The poor were fond of M. Tonot, so were the children and dogs of the village, and Madame de Vauxmesnil always had a smile of welcome for him. But the marquis, who was kind to the priest in his way, mixed a good deal of contempt with his regard. Indeed, such an ecclesiastic as M. Tonot was hardly adapted to please M. de Vauxmesnil. He was neither ambitious nor witty, neither a cynical jesting sprightly abbé, with poetry and the classics at his finger ends, nor a dark-browed ultramontane, cork-screwing his way to notoriety and a bishopric.

"Eh! You have seen her then, the unfortunate! Poor soul, she has suffered in her time, I fear, and no wonder that her temper is soured," said M. Tonot, when I questioned him on the subject of the Cape Rouge. "It is wonderful, monsieur, how accurately some of her predictions have turned out, sinister as

they always are—for she bears no love to the family at the château."

The priest could tell me little more. Even Mary Chardon's age was unknown, the church registers having been burned at the Revolution. How she lived was doubtful, but it was known that she derived some support from the fears or from the pity of the peasants, though she never begged. She was no sham sorceress, such as are common in the French provinces, telling fortunes for a silver fee, and vending charms against mildew and blight, murrain and oidium. She had no living relatives, and none knew the cause of her vindictive spite towards the Vauxmesnils, though the old crone had been heard to mutter, "Blood for blood, tears for tears, sorrow for shame!"

"Old stories, monsieur; tales before the Flood," said M. Tonot, with a shrug; "but it is surprising how keen the old woman's scent is for any misfortune about to overtake the Vauxmesnils. You smile, monsieur. You are an esprit fort, I see: all you English are."

Time went on, and nothing occurred to justify these remarks. The weird figure was

never seen again among the ruins during my residence at the château, and I began to forget it. M. de Vauxmesnil, though comparatively a poor nobleman, was owner of a good deal of property, which might have been worth much more had it been sensibly managed. On this head, however, his prejudices interposed. The métairie system was that which had suited his ancestors, and to this system he obstinately adhered, at a considerable loss of rental. The agriculture of his estates was singularly backward, progress made no way there, and new-fangled machines and modern breeds of cattle were discouraged. When the prefect of the department publicly congratulated the notables on the improvements that yearly took place, he could not deny himself the pleasure of a civil sneer at the ponderous ploughs, the ill-drained fields, and the gaunt coarse-woolled sheep on the Vauxmesnil property. But this censure on the part of a Bonapartist functionary was enough to confirm the marquis in his antiquated habits, and he politely derided all that I could hint on the subject.

In one matter the fancies of the marquis

and his farmers went hand in hand; and this was the wholesale slaughter of small birds. The French tiller of the soil has a deep prejudice on this score; small birds, says Jacques Bonhomme, eat wheat, and peck grapes and cherries: so death to them! And birds grew scarcer and scarcer throughout the province. But matters were brought to a climax, indeed, when a remonstrance was sent down from the ministry in Paris, with orders that the printed document should be affixed to the door of every mairie and chapel, and that the destruction of birds should be stayed. I read the paper, which was terse and good, and pointed out very forcibly what an important link in the chain of nature would be missing were the feathered tribes swept away from earth. The farmer was warned that in murdering birds he was fostering noxious insects; he was reminded that a few ears of corn, and a little fruit, were but a small makeweight to ricks burrowed by the weevil, and fields black with the fly; and that the tiny destroyers would harm his crops a thousand-fold more than ever the poor tomtits and chaffinches had done.

There were those who had the sense to listen to this well-timed appeal. There were more who gaped incredulously at the statistics, and let the nest-robbing and sparrow battues go on. But to the marquis such a piece of advice was gall and wormwood. *He* change his practices at the bidding of an usurping government! *He* receive good counsel at the hands of an imperialist minister of agriculture! He assembled his tenants, harangued them in a speech that came very close to sedition, and set himself to thwart the wise and kind designs of the authorities, with all the short-sighted malevolence of an ill-tempered child.

Such a massacre of birds as then took plac the country had never known. The songs the grove and meadow were silenced. R wards were offered for the heads of lark ar robin, thrush and wren, anything with be and feathers. Gangs of birds'-nesters prow through the woods, guns popped inglorio all day long among vines and hedger poisoned grain was thickly strewn about, hundreds and thousands of dead birds stiff and stark on the inhospitable soil.

The usual consequences of such suicidal folly succeeded. There was a Nemesis of insect life, in the second year of my stay, which made the most obstinate farmer stare aghast at the countless legions burrowing, creeping, or winging their way to blight his hopes of profit. Grubs, caterpillars, flies, weevils, everything that crawls or flies, that bores the root or gnaws the bursting corn-ear, or cankers the blossom, or hollows out the fruit, everything that tunnels the bark or harms the wood of trees, everything that haunts the barn or the store, seemed gathered in hosts undreamed of. There were no birds to thin off the plunderers. Those faithful allies had been stupidly butchered. Their sharp-sighted little eyes and active bills would have done, for scanty wage, a hundred times more to stem the plague than all the hired labourers could do, with all their work of crushing and quick-liming, sulphuring and smoking. What with loss to grain, trees, and fruit, what with the cost of keeping down the pest by human agency, every cultivator suffered heavily, and the marquis found his income and his popularity waning together.

For, people began to regret the birds, and to blame the noble adviser who had urged their extermination. But the marquis was a dogged personage; he would not own himself in the wrong; he hired more and more men to dress the trees of his orchards, and he tried to make clumsy human fingers and toes do the work of the tomtit and the swallow.

On one sad afternoon in early autumn, while they were gathering the wreck of the fruit crop, little Henri begged for a walk in the woods. It was a dark hot lowering day; the air was heavy and dull; and the great masses of copper-coloured cloud that hung lazily in the deep blue sky, had a lurid tinge that threatened storm. All nature seemed oppressed beneath the menace of the gathering tempest, and the hum of the insects sounded sullen among the shrubs of the garden. I declined to accompany my young charge so far as the woods, but suggested as a compromise that we should repair to a certain hill-side orchard, where I knew the fruit was to be gathered that day. Thither we bent our steps, and, seating ourselves on a mossy bank close to the edge of the forest,

which in that place bordered the cultured land, we watched the workers. It was a busy scene. Crowds of peasants: the men in blouse and striped nightcap; the women with broad hats of coarse yellow straw, crimson kirtles, and sabots of black wood: were swarming round the trees, filling baskets with red-cheeked apples and violet or yellow plums. But the fair promise of many a tree proved hollow and fallacious, the caterpillar and grub had been beforehand with the gleaners, and the men were more busy in killing insects than in piling fruit.

I took a book out of my pocket and began to read, giving Henri permission to join one of the groups of apple-pickers, in which old Pierre and his daughter, the blanchisseuse of the château, were employed. Presently I sauntered down to join the party, and found Henri, rosy with exercise, clambering into the upper branches of a gnarled old tree, the trunk of which he had scaled by help of a ladder.

"Hola, cher enfant!" I exclaimed, in some trepidation; "have a care, or you will tumble and hurt yourself."

"No fear, Mr. Kirby," cried the laughing child. "See those apples up above! I *will* pick them." And he pointed to a cluster of fine fruit on a lofty bough, while the servants clapped their hands, and applauded the courage of young "Monsieur le Vicomte."

Plump! A great ugly caterpillar, dislodged by the boy's shaking the tree, fell upon my foot, and then another, and then another, a perfect shower of caterpillars. I picked one of them up. It seemed to be of a new species, and as I had commenced, in a humble way, the study of entomology, I placed it in a tin box to carry home. The peasants were less critical.

"Ah, the wicked beasts!" they cried; "it is they that spoil the apple-crop. Peste! there must be a regular nest of them aloft. Shake them down, please, M. Henri, and we'll stop their pillaging."

The little viscount shook the bough lustily, and the insects fell in swarms, many of them dropping on his upturned face and bare neck; he brushed them off with a cry of dislike, but more fell next moment. The

peasants, with their wooden shoes, soon crushed the fallen brood. A growl of thunder was heard afar off. I called to the child to come down, but it was not until he had gathered two of the apples that he would obey. When he descended he was flushed and trembling.

"Tiens, M. Kirby," said he, "can caterpillars sting? I feel as if I had fallen among the nettles, as I did last year. My neck smarts, and so do my hands, and oh, how my face burns!"

To my surprise I found the child's face and neck covered with dull red blotches, while his little hands were hot and dry, and he trembled like a leaf.

"My poor Henri, we must go home at once," said I, getting alarmed, while the quick natures of those around us broke out into loud exclamations.

The sky darkened fast, and a bright flash of lightning gleamed across the horizon, followed by the deep roll of advancing thunder. The poor little boy was in much pain; he put his weak little hand to his head and moaned as he lay in my arms. He was get-

ting delirious, or at least stupified with the rapid progress of fever.

"Quick!" I exclaimed. "Pierre, help me to carry M. Henri home. The doctor must be fetched at once."

A laugh, as harsh as the croak of a raven, followed my words, and something red came rustling and glancing through the bushes of the nearest thicket.

"The Cape Rouge! The Mère Chardon!" cried the peasants, huddling together. Sure enough, the goblin face and dwarfish figure of the malignant hag, in her frouzy red cape, and leaning on her crutch, hobbled out from the screen of embrowned leaves. Her grey hair fluttered loose, and her eyes sparkled with hate and cunning. She lifted her crutch as if it had been the wand of a wicked fairy, and cried, in an ear-piercing voice:

"Ah! evil race of the Vauxmesnils! Brood of vipers with gilded skin! The curse works, does it? You who oppress and scorn the poor: you who robbed me of home and hope: you on whose heads lie my son's blood and my daughter's shame: you who even murder

the little birds of the forest, blight and wither, old and young, till none of ye be left."

Through the storm and through the rain and the hoarse roar of the tempest, Pierre and I hastily carried the helpless child home. As I looked half timidly back amid the gathering blackness and the fitful glare of the forked flashes, I could still see the figure in the red cape, with streaming grey hair and upraised staff, screaming out unheard curses in the very rush of the tempest. I have seldom seen so painful a sight as the château presented, when the child was laid on his little bed. The sorrow of the mother was passionate and unrestrained, but I think it was still more distressing to mark the anguish of the stern proud father, callous to all the world besides. M. Tonot was sent for and came in haste, but could do nothing.

"If you will take my advice, M. le Marquis, you will send to Lyons for advice at once, and by telegraph. No ordinary physician will be able to deal with such a case. Send for Dr. Servans himself."

The marquis groaned, for the name of Servans was associated in the department

with the most advanced principles in politics, and there had been something like a personal antipathy between the Legitimist noble and the Republican doctor. But he meekly obeyed, and I myself hurried to send off the message. A train left Lyons within the hour, and in a few minutes after its arrival at Rochaigue station, the famous physician stood knitting his grey eyebrows by the bedside of the dying boy. He had never spoken since we brought him in. His eyes were half closed, and he did not know any one present: not the nurse crying at the foot of the bed, not the mother sobbing beside his pillow: not the hard and haughty father, never haughty or hard to him, who stood by, with unwonted tears in his eyes.

It was piteous to see the imploring eagerness with which the marquis scanned the face of his old enemy the doctor, trying to read hope there. Dr. Servans saw the pain and quivering anxiety written on the ordinarily impassive face, and his own shaggy brows twitched, and his rough voice was unusually gentle, as he asked the necessary questions.

"Had the child been stung by a snake?

Well, then, had he eaten any berry, or herb, in the wood? Who was with him when it happened?"

"Mr. Kirby, the English tutor."

I gave a brief account of what had occurred. Dr. Servans saw light amid the darkness.

"The caterpillar—you say you preserved one, monsieur—let me see it!"

I drew out the tin box, and the doctor pronounced the insect to be a specimen of the rare and poisonous Bombyx processionea, whose touch, or even smell, is well known by naturalists to produce violent pain, inflammation, fever, and death.

Why prolong a sad tale? The great physician could do nothing.

Three blouse-clad men then came up, carrying on a hurdle something that lay still and shapeless, something in a tattered Red Cape. There was an awe-stricken look on the men's worn faces.

"Struck by lightning, you say?" cried the doctor. "Ah! I can do nothing here, my friends."

ONLY ONE ROOM.

"CHANGE carriages, here, gentlemen, on account of the Russian frontier. Every one descends. Pardon, gnädiger Herr, but you must remove your effects, for the visite de douane." Thus, the civil Prussian guard of the train.

Out we got accordingly. There were a good many passengers, mostly Germans or German Jews, somehow connected with the trade in corn, feathers, tallow, Riga hemp, and Memel timber; for the station was Eydtkuhnen, on the Eastern Railroad. The flat-capped porters laid violent hands upon the luggage, and we all went through the Prussian bureau and across to that over which was painted the black eagle of Russia, and through the dim glass of whose windows

appeared the green uniforms and glistening pewter medals of the Russian frontier guard. For myself, I felt slightly nervous, as an Englishman often does when he first enters the Czar's dominions, and when all the stories he has ever heard of prison, knout, and Siberia, come crowding on his mind. But I put a good face upon it, and walked into the custom-house along with the rest, carrying my railway rugs over one arm, and in the other hand the small but weighty portmanteau which I had received especial instructions never to trust out of my sight.

This was my first northern journey, and it was undertaken chiefly, though not entirely, on account of business. I was not, strictly speaking, a business man, being, in fact, a sleeping partner in the old established house of Hutchmere, Lowndes, and Co., bankers, of Lothbury, London, E.C. Old Mr. Hutchmere and a deceased uncle of mine had been first-cousins, and the latter had bequeathed to me the small interest he possessed in the firm. The share of the profits thus accruing to me was enough to defray my expenses during the years I had spent in qualifying myself for

practice at the bar, and in waiting till the attorneys should find me out. They had not found me out yet, and I had plenty of spare time. This circumstance probably induced my senior partners to fix their eyes upon me, when a trustworthy messenger was required to convey a large sum of money to a correspondent in Russia.

As Mr. Lowndes, who managed most of the affairs of the house since Mr. Hutchmere had grown so very old and frail, confidentially informed me, we had long been on terms of business intimacy with one of the oldest and most respected of the English firms in St. Petersburg; that of Druce, Gray, and Druce, in the tallow trade, whose signature was known and honoured on every exchange in Europe. But Druce, Gray, and Druce, who were truly reported to have amassed great wealth in forty years' experience of the gainful Russian traffic, had imprudently invested in other securities than tallow. They had lent great sums to the half-ruined Russian nobility, sums duly secured on mortgage of their estates; but the estates were now of little more than nominal value, since the proprietors

had neither serfs nor tenants, neither rent nor obrok. In consequence of this partial collapse of the social system, the St. Petersburg firm that I have spoken of, found itself sorely straitened, and bankruptcy began to threaten the long-prosperous establishment. In this emergency, our house was applied to for aid, and we agreed to come to the rescue, on condition that valuable securities, for the realisation of which we could afford to wait, should be lodged in our hands. These securities were transmitted to London, and but one thing remained—to forward the money urgently needed.

This, however, was not easy. Under ordinary circumstances, a draft on a St. Petersburg bank, or a parcel of bills of exchange, would have answered the purpose; but not then. The credit of a commercial house is as delicate a thing as the white coat of the ermine, and as easily tarnished; and Druce, Gray, and Druce had stipulated that every conceivable precaution should be taken to keep the affair a profound secret. They had weightier reasons for this mercantile prudery than mere pride; they knew too well that while their

capital was chiefly locked up in mortgages upon the unproductive lands of insolvent barons and princes, their sound credit and good name could alone keep them afloat, and that the lightest whisper might occasion a panic among their creditors, and overwhelm them. Time, on the other hand, was money; it was more than money, it was salvation.

"Now, clerks," observed Mr. Lowndes, as we talked the matter over, after dinner, at his house at Wimbledon, "clerks are given to tattle; that is, the younger clerks are. The cashier is discretion itself, but of course he can't be spared, and Mr. Rogers, who is as close as wax, cannot be spared either. *My* going is of course out of the question; too many irons in the fire to leave the City for a day; so, unless you, my dear Bainbridge, will oblige us——"

I was startled, and at first refused to go; but Mr. Lowndes had made a hit in reminding me of my character of habitual wayfarer on the Continent.

"I have never been to Russia," I said, irresolutely.

"So much the more reason for going now,"

returned Lowndes, refilling my glass; and the bargain was speedily clenched. It was agreed that I should visit Moscow and Novgorod, as well as St. Petersburg, and, in fact, "do" Northern Russia in the course of a six weeks' visit, without the cost of a shilling to myself.

Thus it fell out that I found myself on the Russo-Prussian frontier on a grey and moist afternoon in autumn, bound for St. Petersburg.

I found the custom-house officials at Eydtkuhnen much less troublesome than I had expected. Some of the Jewish passengers, to be sure, appeared to undergo an endless round of formalities, but in my case there was little to complain of. My passport was perfectly en règle, duly emblazoned with the British arms, and stamped with red and black eagles in every absurd attitude—to say nothing of the Belgian lion thereon imprinted at Ostend—I was pleased to escape the worry which their own parsimony inflicted on some of my more needy or stingy fellow-travellers; for I bribed freely.

In the first-class carriage of the Russian train I had no companion to Kowno; but there, a gentleman got in. He was a well-

dressed well-looking man of thirty-five: dark, wiry, and active, with lively hazel eyes and superb teeth. With him he brought a heap of fur coats and pelisses, as well as a portmanteau closely resembling that which I kept under my feet, and which contained, in gold and notes, the large sum to be advanced by our house to the firm of Druce, Gray, and Druce. The new arrival took off his hat on getting into the carriage, according to the polite fashion abroad, and, as he settled himself in his seat, eyed me with a quick sidelong glance that seemed to take my measure in a moment.

We were soon engaged in conversation, our talk beginning in French, and gliding imperceptibly into English. My new acquaintance spoke both languages with perfect fluency, and with no perceptibly foreign accent. He was very chatty and agreeable, full of anecdote and information, and told me as much about the country and people of the district we were traversing, as if his life had been spent in the neighbourhood. I set him down inwardly for a Russian nobleman, till by some chance remark

he changed the current of my ideas, and he afterwards frankly owned that he was a Dutch engineer, and named Van Marum.

I presently gathered from M. Van Marum's discourse that he was in the employ, for the time being, of the imperial government, and was preparing estimates for an extensive system of drainage and embankment to be carried into effect on the crown estates. I was equally communicative: not that I thought it prudent to dilate, in conversation with a stranger, upon the considerable sum of which I was the bearer; but I mentioned that business of unusual importance had prompted my journey, and mentioned the name of the firm to which I was accredited.

"You don't say so, my dear sir," exclaimed the Dutchman; "Druce and Co., of Nevskoi Prospekt, and the Admiralty Quay! In that case, permit me to congratulate you in advance, upon the brilliant reception that awaits you. The hospitality of that great house is splendid—sumptuous. Here is Wilna. What on earth is the matter?"

M. Van Marum might well ask! The train had just stopped with a jarring jolt, the

brakes were giving out a grating noise, the steam-pipe had begun to utter its angry roar of impatience, and thump! thump! went the buffers of the carriages together, as we came to an abrupt halt. On our right appeared the town of Wilna, with its grey roofs, and the domes of the numerous churches sheathed in polished metal, bronzed and gilt, or blazing with green and vermilion, under the watery rays of the setting sun. But we had stopped just outside the station, whence came hollow and prolonged noises; the guards ran up and down as fast as their lengthy serge coats permitted, and the little bell of the telegraph gave out its shrill tinkle incessantly.

"Some accident?" I said, jumping up to look out of the window. I took a long look, but could not exactly make out the cause of our detention. *Something* was in the way, something that blocked up the rails, but why it was not shunted off to make room for our progress, I could not conjecture.

"It looks like a line of bullock-cars," said I, resuming my seat.

My companion thrust his head out of the window, saying, "Not so, my dear Monsieur

Bainbridge. Those are the carriages that soldiers travel in. The government must be forwarding troops in haste along the railroad. Something must have happened in the south."

And so it proved. A strong force of troops was being sent to the south and west, to repress some threatened outbreak among the Polish peasants or Russian serfs, and the authorities had pressed all the staff and rolling stock of the line into their service. The rails from Wilna to St. Petersburg were dotted with waggon-trains loaded with men, horses, stores, and artillery. For forty-eight hours there was no hope that the regular passenger traffic could go on, and it was compulsory that we should stop at Wilna, where the guard assured us we should find accommodation worthy of even such distinguished personages as ourselves. There was no help for it.

"Come along, Mr. Bainbridge," said my new friend; "I know Wilna well. There is but one inn above the rank of tavern, and if we do not make haste it will be filled up by these Hebrew brokers, whom you now hear

jabbering out lamentations in our rear. Quick! This way. Those are your trunks? I'll see to them for you. Cloak-room, nonsense! Pardon me; you should never trust effects out of your own custody in Russia. Here is the drosky of the hotel, which the proprietor fondly calls his 'omnibus.' Jump in!"

I congratulated myself, as we jolted along, on the good fortune which had procured me so potent an ally as my Dutch friend, for I began to feel my own helplessness pretty strongly. As I looked up at the dim lanterns that lighted the fronts of the shops—shops adorned with huge gaudy pictures of saints, and the inscriptions over whose doors were in the Cyrillic character—unintelligible to me—I began to experience the sensation of being beyond the pale of civilisation. The groups lounging about the brandy-shops were talking in the Russian language, which has a soft sweet sound, but, at the same time, one rather melancholy and monotonous. But the current of my ideas soon changed when we rattled into the court-yard of a slovenly hotel, that appeared principally to consist of stables.

Van Marum thundered out a demand for the "gospodin," and so peremptory was his voice, and so perfect his fluency in the difficult Muscovite language, that we soon had the landlord, a greasy Russian Jew, cap in hand, before us. A long discussion ensued.

"It is vexatious," said Van Marum. "The inn is very full; some stupid fair has attracted brokers and buyers from a distance; and there remains 'ONLY ONE ROOM.' Come and see it."

Accordingly, preceded by the gospodin, upstairs we went, and the landlord, producing a key, unlocked and opened the door of a large bedroom, decently furnished. The bed was supplied with sheets, which, although coarse, were almost white, and the curtains, floor, and heavy eider quilt, though villanously dirty when judged by a Prussian standard, were clean for Russia.

"You will be able to sleep here?" asked the Dutchman, good-naturedly.

"But you, monsieur?" returned I; "I ought not to monopolise all the accommodation the house affords, and, in fact, your claim is far better than mine."

Van Marum laughingly answered that he should do very well. He was, he said, used to take the rough and smooth of life as he found them, and he could sleep in the salle, wrapped in his cloak, as he had done before.

This, however, I opposed, for I felt shocked at the barefaced selfishness of taking up my quarters in the only habitable chamber, merely because the politeness of my fellow-traveller offered it to me. I flatly refused to take possession unless my new acquaintance could be lodged as well as myself.

A compromise was at last suggested. There was but one bed, but there was a sofa in Number Eight. On this sofa a sort of impromptu bed was hastily rigged up for my companion's use, the luggage was brought up-stairs, and we went gaily down to supper.

I still found my Dutch friend, whom I was inclined to like better and better the more I saw of him, an invaluable Mentor. He unravelled the mysteries of a Russian bill of fare, conjured good wine from the cellar and eatable dishes from the kitchen, and altogether the repast passed pleasantly off.

I had not neglected to take proper precau-

tions for the safety of the large amount of money of which I was custodian. When we went down to supper I brought the heavy little valise with me, and used it for a footstool. When I retired to rest, I did not fail to place the treasure under my head, beneath the feather-bed and bolster, so that it could not be removed without my knowledge during the night. In acting thus, I did not positively anticipate that such vigilance would be needful. Van Marum's frank manner would have disarmed suspicion, had I been of a distrustful nature; but I thought it my duty to keep strict watch and ward.

We slept well: I in the bed of state, with its dingy plumeau of crimson silk, its coarse sheets, and successive layers of feather-stuffing: Van Marum on the sofa, among pelisses and rugs. My own repose must have been unusually profound, thanks, perhaps, to the drowsy properties of a sort of sleeping draught which my Dutch friend had skilfully compounded with hot wine and spices, and which we had imbibed after supper—Van Marum having pressed, with his usual generosity, the lion's share on me.

When I awoke it was broad day, the outer door was unlocked, and I was alone. Not a trace of my late acquaintance remained. His portmanteau was gone, his cloaks were gone, and nothing but a couple of pillows and the mark of his recumbent form on the dusty sofa were visible to prove that he had ever shared my apartment.

Quite alarmed, I sprang out of bed, and, lifting the bolster, saw the dark morocco leather and brass mountings of my portmanteau precisely as I had left them. Not trusting to appearances, I drew out the precious valise, and found, to my great joy, that the casket was intact. The excellent Bramah lock had not been forced, the hinges were in their proper place, all was well. I then bethought me of my other effects. My unlocked trunk was closed; I opened it, and saw the shirts and coats in regular layers, just as I had packed them. My clothes, neatly folded, were on the chair where I had placed them; my watch ticked on the table; and in the pocket of the coat, which I had hung from a nail, I found my purse undisturbed, my pocket-book, my passport in its yellow leather

case, and other little matters. Not the value of a pin's head had been abstracted, and I, who had been disposed to regard myself as a dupe, and my fellow-voyager as a rogue, now took shame to myself for my unjust and gratuitous suspicions. Still, where was Van Marum?

There was no bell, but I hastily dressed, opened the door, and bawled in French and German for the waiter. The fourth summons brought a tow-headed girl with an empty pail in her hand, and though she could speak nothing but Russian, she presently comprehended me so far as to send the waiter—a Jew, like the landlord, and able to converse in broken German.

"I have a note for you, mein Herr, and what would you like for breakfast?" said the man, unwrapping the dirty napkin which he carried as a badge of office, and handing me a letter. It was from Van Marum, written in French, and very short. My late companion informed me that a telegram from headquarters had called him off to Warsaw on professional duty, that he regretted the abrupt termination of our acquaintance, wished

me bon voyage, and had paid the landlord for his share of room and supper. The letter was signed "Cornelius Van Marum," and by its blots and hasty writing showed proofs of hurry.

The landlord, who entered the coffee-room while I was seated at my breakfast, told me in his execrable German that the "foreign lord" had gone off in a hired telega two hours before, on the Warsaw road, as fast as four good nags could wheel him along, and that he had charged him to say "a thousand gracious things" to the English excellency on the part of M. Van Marum.

I passed but a dull day at Wilna. To be sure, the churches were curious, with their amazing pictures and the gaudy robes of the high-capped and long-haired priests, but I soon found that delicate olfactory organs did not agree with close neighbourhood to such a swarm of unsavoury fellow-creatures as were gathered in these edifices. The town was full of a wild, unshorn crowd of buyers and sellers, some in caftans, some in sheepskins, but all unkempt, noisy, and more than half tipsy.

My chief occupation was the paying of

constant visits to the railway station, in hopes that there might be an end to the interruption of the ordinary traffic. But in vain. Troops, troops, troops, kept flowing on in an apparently inexhaustible stream towards the west and south.

Unwilling to spend my whole time in company with the treasure I carried, I hit upon the expedient of placing the valise in a cupboard, which I locked, as well as the door of my room, and slipping the keys into an inner pocket, felt secure as to the safety of the advance so anxiously expected by Druce and partners. I dined early, but by no means well, since I had now no friend to interpret for me, and half the Russian *plats* on whose long-tailed names in the bill of fare I laid my finger at random proved unfit for civilised consumption. Having finished my bottle of hock, which ought to have been superlatively good at the price of seven roubles, I strolled for the fourth time to the station, where I had the satisfaction to learn from the good-tempered old Dane who presided over the telegraph instruments, that there was a lull in the bustle of martial preparation, and that by

half-past four P.M. of the following day I might reckon upon the means of pursuing my journey.

I went back to the hotel in good spirits. Scarcely had I crossed the threshold before the Hebrew waiter, with his many-stained napkin rolled round one of his dingy thumbs, bolted out of some secret lair where he had been washing glasses and settling plates upon a rack.

"Ach, himmel! ach, Fader Abraham! here he is again!" cried he.

"He has come back?" bawled the landlord, with uplifted hands and eyes, emerging from his bar parlour.

"Mein Herr, the police are above stairs," whispered the waiter in awe-struck tones.

Before I could ask an explanation, two brawny green-coated gendarmes came clattering down the dirty wooden staircase, and, before I could recover from my surprise, I found myself collared, hustled, pushed upstairs, and thrust into my own apartment, which I found full of policemen and other functionaries, in and out of uniform. At a table sat a lean man in black, pen in hand,

writing away as if for his life, and with several sheets of official foolscap before him, as well as a portly purple-faced individual in uniform, and with several medals and crosses glittering on his breast. My trunks had been burst open, my clothes lay strewed about, and the cupboard door, as well as the precious portmanteau, had been unscrupulously forced. Some of those present were fumbling among my shirts, or exploring the pockets of dress-waistcoats; one fellow of intelligent aspect had made free with my writing-case, and was coolly poring over my letters with the aid of a dictionary; another was counting out the gold and notes in my valise, with all the dexterous composure of the teller of a bank.

Amazement and indignation stopped my mouth. My blood was boiling, but I could not find words to express myself, but merely gasped forth my anger and surprise, as I stood under the eyes of this intrusive assemblage, fast pinioned between the two gendarmes.

"Is that the 'suspect' himself?" asked the portly personage in uniform, speaking in French, which language is compulsorily fami-

liar to all members of the Russian tchinn, or official caste. One of the men in black spoke in Russian to one of the gendarmes, and then bowing deeply, said:

"Batuscha, I have the honour to report that the 'compromised' was captured below, in an audacious effort to return, probably with the desperate hope of carrying off the treasure."

For a moment I fancied myself dreaming. Then anger prevailed, and I shook off the grasp of the gendarmes, loudly demanding of what I was accused, and by what right they had committed so unwarrantable a trespass on my person and property? But I took nothing by my motion. Three pair of strong hands grappled me with a force beyond resistance, and the interpreter hastily assured me that I should be put in irons forthwith, if I failed again in the respect due to the governor.

"I don't care a straw for all the governors in Russia," answered I, recklessly, "and you will live to repent this outrage. England does not allow her subjects to be oppressed without exacting reparation, as you will learn." I saw a sneer on the faces of all those who under-

stood French. The governor, though a fierce and consequential looking person, laughed outright.

"That trick will not serve your purpose, monsieur!" said he, scornfully: then, turning to the man who had been counting the money, he asked him what was the amount?

"One hundred and seventy-one thousand and fifteen roubles, nine copecks, at the current rate of exchange of six roubles thirty-one copecks per pound sterling," was the reply.

"Write that down in the procès-verbal!" said the governor; and the pen of the clerk flew over the paper.

It now occurred to me that I must be the victim of some mistake, some unlucky coincidence. Accordingly, I stated, as calmly and coherently as I could, my name, position in life, the errand that took me to Russia, and my being accredited to the widely-known firm of Druce, Gray, and Druce.

They heard me to the end, with a civil sneer of incredulity on their faces, and then requested proofs of the truth of my statements.

"Proof!" said I, "what proofs can I offer if you persist in disbelieving a plain series of common-place facts. You have my letters before you, and I see that one of your spies is mastering the contents. Pray do you not find ample confirmation there, of my assurance that I am a member of the Inner Temple, and have no more concern with your country than with China or Ashantee?"

The interpreter spoke in Russian to the governor, who shook his head, and bluntly told me that the letters were "ingeniously composed, and gave a good colour to my assumed character, but that I was found out. I might drop the mask. The time for feigning was over, but I might merit the imperial clemency by free and full confession."

I almost choked at this. However, I remembered my passport, which I had about my person, and I at once offered it to the governor for inspection. This valuable document was neatly bound in a yellow leather case, with clasps, and the case was duly stamped in gold letters with my name and address, Thomas Chatterton Bainbridge, Harecourt, Temple, and with the Chatterton crest,

a goldfinch proper. As for the pass itself, I felt sure that it would carry conviction to the most prejudiced mind. But what was my horror when the governor, after slowly perusing the name on the binding, opened the case, unfolded the rustling official paper emblazoned with the arms of England, and read out a request to all friendly powers to give aid and protection to "Mr. (or Count) Demetrius Zlisynczka!" a naturalised British subject, about to proceed to Frankfort-sur-Mein," &c.

A loud exclamation burst from all the bystanders, and was echoed by the listening servants along the passages of the hotel. In every eye I could read wonder and satisfaction, mingled with admiration of my impudence.

"Zlisynczka!" I heard them mutter, and the gripe of the gendarmes tightened as they became aware of the importance of their prisoner. My passionate declarations were laughed at. I was bluffly declared to be a Pole, and no born Briton; my errand to Russia would warrant my lifelong banishment to Siberia, even if past misdeeds did not pro-

cure my condemnation. And I was ordered off to jail to await my trial, with the assurance that only by giving up my accomplices could I obtain mercy.

"But the money, the money?" I cried, struggling as I was dragged away.

"The money with which the Revolutionary Committee have supplied you to sow sedition in the Czar's dominions, is confiscated to the Czar's use," said the governor, testily; and I was hurried away.

They thrust me into the common jail, giving me, however, a cell to myself. This cell was about the size of the sleeping cabins on board a steam-packet; it was dimly lighted; and its iron-studded door and stoutly-barred window looked as if they might have baffled Jack Sheppard. I was searched, and my money, pocket-book, and watch, my rings, my pencil, and penknife, were solemnly taken away. I asked for writing materials, but my captors shook their heads.

When they were gone, I sat down upon the mean pallet bed, the legs of which were screwed to the floor, buried my head in my

hands, and fairly sobbed. Pride and the sense of innocence had hitherto sustained me, but now my strength gave way, and I felt a dreadful sense of depression and isolation in that strange half-barbarous land, and wept as bitterly as a lonely child lost in the darkness. Was it not all a dream?

Time seemed in no hurry. Three times a day my jailer, an invalided soldier, drilled to the bloodless regularity of an automaton, visited me. He brought me bad coffee and dark bread, indifferent cabbage soup and sour quass, and then good tea and dark bread, at early morning, noon and sunset. He swept my cell, refilled my pitcher, arranged my wretched bed, and marched off in aggravating silence. Indeed, he spoke no tongue but Russian; *that* he could not help; but he never deigned to reply by sign or smile to all my beseeching looks and expressive pantomime, and I could hardly help giving way, sometimes, to an insane impulse to fly at his throat. There came, also, at irregular intervals, a superior official in uniform, who narrowly examined the cell, and tested every bar and bolt with a small hammer, and

rapped on the walls and floor to detect any excavation on which I might have been busy. But I had none of the talents of Baron Trenck or Latude, and made no effort at breaking bounds, so he might have spared his pains. He, too, refused to converse. When my gestures grew exceedingly animated, he made shift to tell me in French that "if contumacious, I should be chained."

In vain I demanded a trial, a public hearing. The governor with two inferior judges in black, a greffier and an interpreter, did twice visit my cell; but, as I could only tell the truth, while they were seeking political revelations, they merely set me down for the most obstinate and brazen of culprits, and I was warned that my recusancy would bring down on my head the full weight of the emperor's displeasure.

I kept a reckoning of the days. More than a week had elapsed since my arrest—it might have been a year by the tedium of it—but it was now the twenty-fifth, and if Druce, Gray, and Druce were unable to meet their engagements on the twenty-eighth, speedy

bankruptcy must follow, and the fair credit and great business of the merchant princes would collapse like a soap-bubble. I went nearly mad as I paced the monotonous round of my cell, watching the dawning day, and thinking of the mischief about to ensue. But the authorities were deaf to my remonstrances and I could not even elicit from them when or where, if ever, I was to be tried for my imaginary offences. I was hopelessly a prisoner. I might die in jail, I might go mad, or, who knows, I might actually be sent to Siberia, and perhaps grow grey in the Ural mines, I—Thomas Chatterton Bainbridge—in expiation of the sins of a man whose very name I could not pronounce.

I had been listening to the rattle of every key, to the sound of every step. Mercy! Was I awake? *Was* it the voice of the official interpreter whom I heard, amidst a great bustle, apologising to somebody in bad French for the fâcheuse circonstance of the English gentleman's ten days' detention? Magistrate, greffier, turnkey, guard, soon entered my cell; and who was that tall, frank-looking young

Englishman, who came forward to shake my hand as if he would have wrung it off?

"Mr. Bainbridge, allow me to introduce myself—George Druce, nephew of Druce and partners. My dear sir, how sorry we all are that you should have suffered so much on your kind errand to serve us! How lucky we learned your whereabout! I was sent off at once, after the governor, my uncle, had made it all right with the Russian authorities. Shamefully you were treated to be sure, but that fellow has the cunning of Old Nick himself."

"What fellow?" I asked.

"That Pole, that Zlisynczka, the Mazzini of the North. He wrote a letter to our house which confessed, in a jocular manner, the trick he had played you. He stole your passport in the night, at the inn, substituting his own; and, as Mr. Bainbridge, he easily managed to elude suspicion, and plunge deep into the interior, on one of his dangerous missions. The disguise has now served his turn, for the man has as many characters as Proteus, but he never meant your imprisonment to be perpetual."

"How?" cried I, as a light broke in upon me. "Do you mean that my companion at the hotel, Van Marum, the Dutch engineer, was Zlis——what do you call him?"

"The same," answered Druce, smiling.

THE ROLL OF MUSIC.

"LEAVING us, Captain Yates, and so soon? How very much we shall miss you. And I, who had counted on you as one of my knights during the winter! You must own that you are a sad truant!" said the old princess, with a kind smile. Though why she should wonder that a Queen's messenger like myself should get the route from St. Petersburg it would have been hard to guess. The wonder was, rather, that I should have been kept dangling so long about the embassy, under orders to report myself every morning, but my own master as to the disposal of my superfluous time. It was summer, and the Russian capital was as empty as a capital ever is, but I had met with a good deal of

hospitable attention. And now, under orders to start for Vienna with important despatches I was paying a hasty round of farewell visits.

Although I had been often in St. Petersburg before, I had only of late been introduced to the Princess Anna Sobieski, widow of a Polish noble, who had represented a junior branch of that great historic race which has given kings and martyrs to Poland. The old lady—whose large landed possessions, bequeathed by her husband, had procured her the dubious compliment of an imperial command to reside in the metropolis—had treated me with much kindness, and my first call, when the order to depart arrived, was to the Sobieski palace.

I forget what I said, but the conversation rolled on in the usual common-place strain of French compliment, until the princess inquired if I should make any stay at Warsaw? If so, perhaps I would do a kind turn to an old woman who had few opportunities of communicating with her native country. It was nothing—a mere toy—a bagatelle not worth the attention of a State messenger like ce cher capitaine, who carried papers the

contents of which might convulse Europe—but, but would I take charge of a roll of manuscript music, produced by a gifted German composer in the capital, and which her dear niece, enthusiastic about music as all Poles were, was dying to receive? Still it was a precious charge, being a loan, since the composer declined to publish it, and on that account it could not be entrusted to the care of the Russian railway officials. The princess added, that her brother, Count Szomyzy, lived but eleven virsts from Warsaw, that his castle was just then full of guests and gaieties, and that I should be a welcome visitor there on the mention of her name.

It was to the count's only daughter, Rosalie, that this invaluable roll of manuscript music was to be conveyed, and her aunt jestingly advised me to take good care of my heart, since her young relative was acknowledged to be the reigning beauty in the government of Warsaw. I laughed at such a warning. The habit of a roving life had shown me the ease with which impressions are effaced by absence; but I was glad to be of use in a way that involved no dereliction of duty.

More than once, I had felt myself bound to refuse Polish friends some favour which would have been discordant to the allegiance I owed to Downing-street, and I was rejoiced that the kind old lady had asked of me nothing that bore, however remotely, on politics.

The roll of music, in a locked morocco-case, with the little silver key dangling from it by a string, was delivered at my hotel by one of the princess's chasseurs, and I placed it in my portmanteau, with a mental resolve to diverge from Warsaw to the country-seat of Count Szomyzy, if only for an hour or two.

I had packed my effects, and was ready to start, when a man suddenly burst into the room, and fell on his knees before me.

It being always necessary to speak decidedly to a Russian, I ordered him to leave the room. He was not a beggar—he was too well dressed; not wearing the caftan and boots, but a decent suit of European clothing. Tears were streaming down his face, and he seemed sober, though he moaned piteously as he embraced my knees after the abject fashion of his countrymen.

"Noble excellency! magnanimous Englishman! have some pity on a wretch whose whole life hangs on your honourable decision. I swear to your grandeur that you can make a whole family happy or miserable by a word, one little word, illustrious one!"

With some trouble, I drew from the man, whose language, in spite of his agitation, was too pure for a mujik, the substance of his petition. His seemed to be really a hard case. He was a courier, having travelled Europe for years with different masters, and he had a wife and children living at Naples, where he was in hopes of an engagement in the service of a former employer, one of the wealthy Demidoff family. However, he had been recalled to Russia to give evidence in a lawsuit, and, on preparing to leave St. Petersburg, the police, in some fit of caprice, had refused him his passport, on the ground that a Russian, unless noble, could not by law quit the empire *alone*. If he had a master, well and good. If not, he might stay where he was.

"But I don't want a servant: should not know what to do with one," said I, hardly

knowing how to get rid of the singular suppliant. But a flood of words overwhelmed me. My protection was alone asked for. Ignatius—that was the man's name—was only to be nominally my retainer, and was not to cost me a copeck. He had money for his expenses, and only wanted the ægis of my name. In return for this, I should have his undying gratitude, and his devoted services upon the journey to Vienna. He pulled out his passport for my inspection—or rather the "provisional permit" that represented it—and I satisfied myself that Ignatius Kraskoff, native of Moscow, was really in the strait he represented himself, for across the document was written, "Papers refused, conformably to ukase," with the signature of a high functionary.

I could not deny the poor man the trifling favour he asked, so I wrote a line to the police prefect, requesting permission to take him as my servant, and committed the note to Ignatius, who received it with transports of joy, kissing my hand, and, I believe, my boots, with the exaggerated humility which the Russians owe to their Oriental traditions.

Two hours later, on reaching the railway terminus, sure enough, there was Ignatius, in his smart garb of green cloth trimmed with Astracan fur, the livery of the Demidoffs, bustling to and fro with the utmost activity. He had already secured a compartment for my especial behoof, had placed the lately published editions of the Invalide Russe and the Northern Bee ready for my perusal, and on my arrival pounced on my cloaks, canes, and luggage with a zeal and energy which I had never seen equalled by the best paid of his professional brotherhood.

It need not be imagined that the only preliminaries to starting, as with us in Western Europe, were the taking of tickets and registering of baggage. On the contrary, the great question under discussion was, not what could be done for the traveller's comfort or safety, but whether the candidate for a place in the train were a fit and proper person to be suffered to go at all. Those were the old harsh days of the Emperor Nicholas, when Russia was an enormous camp, under martinet discipline, and railways were looked on with no great liking by the official Tchinn.

In the times of which I speak, two hours, at the lowest computation, had to be spent at the station whence a voyager meant to depart, and two hours more full of vexatious ceremonies, tedious delays, and the petty insolence of Jacks-in-office, can scarcely be conceived. The station was full of scowling policemen, in uniforms of every shade—blue, green, grey, more or less medalled and military of aspect, but all troublesome, venal, and suspicious. Passports were handed from bureau to bureau, stamped, countersigned, inspected, cavilled at; luggage was examined, pockets tapped, travellers cross-questioned on every conceivable point, and an incessant clinking of silver and pocketing of bribes went on as an undercurrent to this chorus of query and answer.

As a cabinet messenger, I was exempt from the annoyances that fell to the lot of my fellow-travellers, especially of such as were too poor or too stingy to fee the official vampires, and my papers were civilly returned to me, after a long delay, while my luggage was not disturbed by any prying on the part of the imperial agents. At length the ordeal was past; the last rouble that could be extorted

from Polish Jew or Russian trader was secured; the engine puffed out hoarse notes of impatience, and the people took their places, the mob of beards and caftans crowding the waggons of the third class, and a few well-dressed persons entering the first and second-class carriages.

"A pleasant trip to you, Yates, and I wish I were going too. Even Vienna and its Volksgarten is better fun than St. Petersburg in the dog days. But is that your courier?" observed young Dillon from the embassy, a junior attaché with whom I was on very friendly terms, and who had strolled down to see me off. At that instant, Ignatius, who had just brought me some flowers and a basket of Ingrian cherries, had scoured off on some new self-imposed task, and was dimly visible in the distance. The bell had rung, and the guards were marshalling the bewildered peasants, new as they were to steam and iron roads, into their respective cars. I hastily told my friend how it was that I had become the nominal master of so splendidly-accoutred a retainer. Indeed, such an explanation seemed necessary, for Ignatius, with his

bullion-tasselled cap, morocco money-bag, and green livery trimmed with costly dark fur, looked more fitted to serve a royal highness than a mere subaltern of the F.O.

"Ignatius Kraskoff — Kraskoff — are you *quite* sure that is the name?" asked Dillon, thoughtfully. I was quite sure.

"Strange, how that name runs in my head! Yet I have not the least idea where I heard it, and I'm certain I never set my eyes on the fellow's swarthy face before. A stunning servant he seems; but, somehow, I must have heard of him before."

I laughed, and remarked that all Russian names were pretty much alike, ending as they did in the invariable "off," "vitch," or "sky." Young Dillon was a fine generous lad; but he was not thought over bright, and his bad memory was a theme for joking at the embassy. I paid, therefore, very little attention to his imperfect reminiscences, while he, on the other hand, as some men will do, grew absorbed and silent, and was evidently racking his brain to identify the name that haunted him.

Ignatius bowed and smiled me into my

carriage, the guard closed the door, the bell rang again, I shook hands with Dillon out of the window, and settled myself for the start. Off the train glided, amid many ejaculations on the part of the mujiks, who blessed themselves and invoked their saints as the snorting iron horse wheeled them away. The pace increased, and we were almost clear of the station. Heaven and earth! what is the matter?

It was the young attaché, without his hat, running breathless along the platform, and for a moment coming abreast of my carriage.

"I say, Yates," he called out, with a gasp, "I remember now. Kraskoff is——"

A scream from the engine drowned the words, and in a moment more we darted through an archway full of steam and smoke, and I neither saw nor heard any more of my young countryman. This incident made little impression on me, beyond giving me a laugh at Dillon's sudden revival of memory, and his effort to impart to me some real or fancied facts—wholly immaterial, no doubt—with respect to my superb servitor.

I had fully expected that the exuberant

gratitude of the courier would die out as soon as we were well away from St. Petersburg, and, in fact, I was rather in hopes that he would cease the volunteer good offices, that teased as much as they amused. But I had reckoned wrongly. Ignatius continued to attend me with the same zeal and pertinacity with which Man Friday fulfilled the behests of Robinson Crusoe. He was not to be shaken off, and during that summer journey of brief halts and almost continuous wayfaring, he showed such thoughtfulness, such good temper, was so eager to please, that to repulse him with anything like harshness or petulance was impossible. He was, in truth, an admirable servant.

Warsaw at last. But we were not permitted to enter the station until the train had been brought to a halt, and a severe examination of passports and faces had taken place. The imperial gendarmes who acquitted themselves of this duty were unusually curt of speech and peremptory of bearing, and seemed ill at ease. Drums were heard beating, and bugles sounding, in the town, and it was plain that the whole garrison must be astir.

"What has occurred?"

"A conspiracy detected. Numerous arrests. A state of siege proclaimed."

Yet, as I drove from the station to the Palatine Hotel, I saw no particular signs of popular commotion. There were whisperings, and cautious interchange of words among the groups at the corners of streets, and I noticed the square Polish cap and jaunty Polish jacket, the wearing of which was accounted as half treasonable by the Czar Nicholas, more prominent than usual. But of noise there was none, except the heavy tramp of horse and foot, as the Russian troops swept through the streets, squadrons and battalions following the battalions and squadrons that had gone before, as though to prove to the conquered race the hopelessness of resistance.

Although fairly inured to fatigue, I was now somewhat weary, and was not sorry to reach the inn, where I counted on a night's sound sleep. I had, in truth, somewhat condensed the first portion of my journey, that I might have time to execute the princess's commission, and I was thus sleeping at Warsaw

at a time when his excellency the ambassador, if he thought on the matter at all, imagined me to be at Wilna. Ignatius, on the other hand, was very fresh, and as brisk and attentive as ever. He whisked up and down the dirty but splendid marble staircase of the great hotel, busy at once with preparations for my supper, and with purveying for me such scraps of news as fell in his way. From him I learned that a wide-spread plot had been detected, that the police were scouring the city, and that the citadel was full of captives, some of whom belonged to the noblest families of Poland.

"What will be done with them?" I asked.

The man shrugged his shoulders. "Generous Englishman, who knows? They will be tried by court-martial, and perhaps some may suffer death. Those who are lucky will get off with five years in a fortress, in irons, or with service against Schamyl in the Caucasus. Most of them will be knouted or sent to Siberia. Poor wretches! they are goaded to revolt, and then crushed."

"Hush, friend," said I hastily, for I thought I heard a step and the clink of spurs in the

corridor, and I knew what linguists the Russian officers were. "Hush! Politics are best left undiscussed, at any rate on this side of Cracow."

The caution I had just administered was entirely prompted by the fear that Ignatius would get himself into trouble, were eavesdroppers to overhear his rash remarks. Indeed, it was not the first time in our hurried journey that Ignatius had uttered something which, however slight, showed advanced ideas for a Russian of the days before the Crimean war.

I fell asleep as soon as my head touched the pillow, but my dreams were troubled and painfully vivid. The old Princess Sobieski, transformed into a malignant fairy, hovered incessantly around my couch, waving her ivory-handled crutch-stick (she was lame, and carried such a prop) by way of a wand, and mopping and mowing at me in the wickedest exultation. Ignatius, in a black cloak, with a stiletto in his right hand, glided around me like a snake, and was always on the point of stabbing—whom or what I know not. And Dillon, the young attaché, was frequently

present, always gasping, breathless, eager to communicate some all-important secret, but entirely unable to do more than make the most absurd grimaces. I think this last phase of the dream must have awakened me, for I awoke, laughing, the amusement predominating over the more disagreeable impressions to which my visions were calculated to give rise. I laughed again, as I rubbed my eyes. Poor Dillon! what a queer figure he cut, hatless, and gurgling for breath, at the end of the platform! I wonder what mighty intelligence the poor lad sought to communicate. Some mare's nest, no doubt.

The soft morning light was pouring in, and the early bugles were sounding at the Russian barracks far away. I rose, ordered breakfast, and writing a short note to Count Szomyzy, sent it by a mounted messenger. Ponies and boys, equally unkempt, wild and active, are always plenty in Poland, and the promise of an extra rouble for speed sent off the emissary like a cannon-shot. In a briefer time than I had expected, the boy returned, bearing a courteous answer from the noble Polish landholder, begging that I would take up my

quarters at the castle, where a friend of his sister would always be more than welcome, and naming five o'clock as the dinner-hour, if not inconvenient to myself. I determined to accept this frank invitation, the rather as I was anxious to see something of Polish customs and character. Suddenly it occurred to me that the note was open when delivered, and I sharply questioned the boy who had brought it.

"Gracious sir, the Russian guard!"

It really appeared, on further inquiry, that the guard stationed at the gate of the city had stopped the messenger both on his exit and return, and that my note, like that of the count, had been unscrupulously opened and read by the subaltern in command. This was not a usual precaution, even during a state of siege; but I was informed that private intelligence which had reached the authorities had induced extreme vigilance. It was rumoured that some manifesto, or other document, of the utmost importance, and to which were appended the signatures of many men of high rank and influence, hostile to Muscovite rule, was passing from hand to hand. And every

"plotnik" in Poland was anxious to earn promotion and reward by intercepting papers of so compromising a character.

"A carriage of some sort, Ignatius, to take me to the château. Then, if you will have the bill ready, and the luggage taken down, we can start by the express for the south, after I get back again. The rest of the day will be at your own disposal, of course. I dare say you have friends here who will be glad to see you."

The eleven versts of sandy road were soon performed by the fleet, loose-jointed Lithuanian horses, which were driven in a sort of wicker-work cart, covered with a pink and white tilt, by a wild lad in a sheepskin pelisse. I chatted with the driver, and we understood each other pretty well, considering that I only knew some scraps of Polish and Russian. He was, he told me, a noble, the son of a man who had had his property confiscated by the Moskov tyrants for joining Kosciusko. His father was a glazier, his two uncles worked in a forge, and he had four or five brothers and sisters. They lived very poorly, on cabbage soup and rye bread; they could

not read or write; the one thing they knew and cared for was that they were Poles—Poles and nobles.

"Are there many like you?"

"Gracious sir, who knows! Thousands, very likely. Perhaps more. I could mention a good number. We are ill off now, but we shall get our own again when we have chased away the Russians. Yes, yes, the good times will come back. Hoop! horses! hoop! away!"

Presently we saw the castle, with its straggling line of brick and timber buildings, large but irregular, and one grey tower rising over the rest of the pile, dinted and crumbling, but of immense solidity.

Dashing through some slovenly plantations, where the wild-plum and wild-pear, the favourite trees of the Polish nation, overnumbered the elms and birch-trees, we reached the gate, and were received by a large retinue of servants and barking dogs. There was not one of the former who had a clean face or a whole coat, but I never saw men more courteous to a stranger than those long-haired, shabbily-clad Poles, and they ap-

peared to receive their master's guest as if he were a benefactor of their own.

I was shown into a large saloon, the decorations of which must once have been splendid enough. But the mirrors were dimmed and cracked, the marbles chipped, the gilding dull, and cobwebs clung to the cornices, which had been handsomely carved in the old French style. The furniture was ludicrously scanty, according to the ordinary European standard, but everything told of decay, and it was evident that the castle had been a magnificent residence some eighty or ninety years ago.

There was no lack of guests. The great room was filled with company, and I remarked that almost every one present had handsome features, and a bearing at once gentle and spirited, that contrasted forcibly with the usual inmates of a St. Petersburg drawing-room, its flat-faced men and sallow dames. Most of those I saw wore the picturesque Polish dress, richly embroidered, and the amaranth velvet of the pelisses matched well with the dark hair and pale keen features of the wearers.

The count, who was much the junior of his sister, Princess Anna, received me with much cordiality, and presented me to his three sons and his daughter, Rosalie Szomyzy. I had just time to see that the latter was a most beautiful dark-eyed girl, well meriting her aunt's eulogies, when I was put under the care of my host's valet, and hurried off to dress for dinner, which was nearly ready.

"Where on earth are you taking me? This is some one else's room!" I ventured to remonstrate, as I was ushered into a long low room, uncarpeted, but provided with five or six beds, and where sabres and pelisses, cloaks, saddle-bags, and riding gear, lay strewed in heaps.

"Pardon, excellent sir," said the grinning valet, as he bowed in deprecation of my remark—"a thousand excuses! This is the apartment of the bachelor lords."

And, to my surprise, I found that the arrangements of a Polish household are in some respects copied from those of the neighbouring Turks, and that the "selamlik," or men's apartment, is a time-honoured Sarmatian institution. However, I had little time

to meditate, but, making a hasty toilet, reached the saloon just before the horn sounded for dinner.

During the long and plentiful, if ill-served meal, there was conversation enough, but it was mostly in Polish, or in the colloquial Latin which the natives of Poland and Hungary—or the higher classes of them—speak with as much rapid fluency as their own tongues. To judge by the tones of the speakers, the talk was rather sad than gay, and by the constant recurrence of the words "Warsaw" and "Moskov," I gleaned that the state of siege was frequently mentioned. I saw visible signs of emotion, quivering nostrils, eyes bright with anger or scorn, and heard more than one gentle voice tremble, though not with fear, in uttering the hateful name of the Russian oppressor.

Whenever I spoke, either in French or German, I received a courteous reply, and the old count and one of his sons frequently and politely addressed me; but I felt somehow that there was a freemasonry among the company from which I was excluded. They were kind and affable, but I was not one of them-

selves, and they were too deeply interested in one subject to have ears and tongues for casual conversation.

"A political gathering!" said I to myself, and felt somewhat uncomfortable. My favour at head-quarters depended, I well knew, on my keeping up a strict neutrality, and I congratulated myself that my stay under Count Szomyzy's roof would be but brief. And yet, with all my prudence, I could not but sympathise with the gallant high-spirited men and graceful women around me, and I sighed as I remembered the melancholy failure that had for many years attended every effort of a race so gifted and so unfortunate.

After the heady Hungarian wine had been succeeded by coffee, we all rose from table, and returned to the saloon into which I had first entered, and where a band of motley musicians had already begun to tune their instruments. Often as I had heard of the passionate Polish taste for music and dancing, I had never till then realised the eager delight with which those present took their places, whirling round in the quick movements of the dance, as if bewitched by the tune.

Polkas and mazurkas, the national dances, and the wild, swift Magyar waltz, kept us all well employed. The woes of Poland were forgotten for a time, I believe, in the physical toil and excitement of the scene, and the flashing eyes and flushed cheeks of those around me told me how dear the amusement was to their generous and energetic natures.

The ball had gone on above an hour, and I, as a stranger, had twice had the honour of giving my hand to Rosalie Szomyzy. It was during a pause in the exciting Magyar waltz, as we stood together under a huge battered picture in a frame of dimmed gold, and whose subject was Watteau's version of Arcadia, with hooped and highly-rouged shepherdesses, that the count passed, and whispered something to his daughter. I saw the beautiful girl's flushed cheek grow suddenly pale, and then redden again, as she asked me, with some embarrassment, "Whether her aunt Sobieski had not—had not requested me to deliver some trifle—a present—on her part to Rosalie Szomyzy?"

The question was a very natural one; the only puzzle to me was the evident and appa-

rently causeless emotion of the fair speaker. Nieces might be very fond of their aunts, but why they should be thus agitated at receiving a token of their affection, was incomprehensible.

"Certainly," said I, with a smile; "not that I am the bearer of any remarkable treasure. A roll of music, on which the princess seemed to set great store——"

I broke off abruptly, for at that moment a faint, far-distant sound, hardly audible to the most attentive ear, reached me. The clank of cavalry advancing at a rapid pace! It was impossible for an old soldier to mistake the peculiar jingle of sword and stirrup, and the deep beat of many hoofs striking the ground in unison. But at the same instant the music poured forth its maddening strains with fresh spirit, and the sounds I had heard were drowned by the melody.

"This—this roll of music, captain; I am so longing to see it. My dear, good aunt! Have you it here?"

Mademoiselle Rosalie's sweet voice trembled as she pronounced these common-place words; she tried to smile, but her lips quivered, her

eyes were full of tears; I saw her father, under the shadow of a pillar, watching her keenly and anxiously from a distance.

"Mademoiselle—you are ill—the heat of the weather, and——"

"No, no, I am quite well. It was only a silly fancy. I was impatient to see my aunt's gift, that was all," said my pretty partner, hurriedly. Now, it so happened that the gift in question was in the room; I never liked to let the despatches out of my sight, and I had hidden in a corner of the dancing-room the official bag which contained them, side by side with the morocco-case that held the princess's precious music. We were within a few yards of the nook where these objects lay, and I at once stepped forward to pick up the morocco-case, and placed it in the hands of its fair owner, saying lightly as I did so, "I am sure Princess Anna would be gratified could she see——"

When a man, glided like a serpent along the wall, darted forward, and rudely snatched the packet! A scream broke from my partner's lips, and I grasped the intruder by the arm, but recoiled, less from the pistol which

was presented at my head, than in sheer surprise.

"Ignatius!"

"Ay, captain," said the courier, whose shrewd face wore a look of irrepressible triumph. "Ay, captain, Ignatius, your worship's poor servant. But the tables are turned now."

At the same moment there was a great clash of weapons, and a wild outcry of voices, and a servant of the count's, bleeding from a sabre cut, rushed groaning in, and fell at his master's feet. The music came to an abrupt stop, and the dancers crowded together like a bevy of frightened wild-fowl. Then followed the tramp of booted feet, and the saloon was suddenly filled by Russian soldiers, their swords flashing in the light of the lustres and lamps. The officer in command gave some brief orders, and in a moment every one of the male guests was secured. So quickly was the work done, that resistance was impossible, even had there been a fair chance of repelling force by force. As it was, the dragoons had an easy task, and while some of them held their cocked pistols to our

foreheads, their comrades were binding our wrists tightly together with thongs or cords. Only one person, so far as I know, was hurt during the onslaught, and this was the servant I have spoken of, and who had been sabred in a futile attempt at giving the alarm.

"I am a British officer, sir, and you will have to answer for this outrage," said I to the Russian major, as he passed me; stolid and smiling, as if the sobs and cries of the terrified women, and the indignant remonstrances of the captives, had been soothing to his ear.

The major made no reply, but taking the roll of music, in its morocco-case, which Ignatius obsequiously proffered, burst the box open with the point of his cavalry sword, and deliberately opened and spread out—*not* a roll of music, but a closely-written document, to which were appended a great number of signatures. The Russian's yellow moustaches actually appeared to bristle, like those of a cat springing on its prey, as his cold blue eyes fell on this paper.

"At last, Polish dogs, I have you in my clutches!" he shouted, as he slapped the

manuscript with his heavy hand; "the council of war will make short work with your rebellious lives, for here is the proof of your conspiracy."

"Which this noble English seigneur has brought from St. Petersburg, like an ass that knows not what he carries on the pack-saddle," said Ignatius, my precious courier, who now stood revealed in his true colours as a hypocrite of the first water.

An appalling scene followed. As the prisoners were dragged away, their wives, sisters, daughters, clung to them with tears and shrieks, believing they were to be led off to immediate butchery, and the poor ladies were driven back, often with unfeeling violence, by the Russian soldiers.

But no pillage of the castle took place, the troops being of a regularly disciplined corps, and the officer too great a martinet to disobey orders.

Tied two and two, we were placed in country carts and driven off under escort to the citadel of Warsaw; and it was only by using the name of the Queen of England, and repeatedly urging my position of a State

messenger, that I could persuade the Muscovites to let the Foreign-office despatches accompany me. In the citadel of Warsaw I spent four-and-twenty miserable hours, my mind torn by regrets for the kindly and gentle people who had so lately broken bread with me, and whose fate was now so disastrous, and distracted by gloomy forebodings as to my own future. True, I was safe from bullet or scourge, from Siberia or death. But a long detention, coupled with the non-delivery of the dispatches, would be ruin to my prospects in life.

After a time I was admitted to a private interview with the viceroy, and to my great joy and surprise was informed that I was free to depart.

"My courier had explained," the prince said, with a polite smile of dismissal, "the little *ruse* of which I had been the victim. There was no reason longer to impede my journey."

It cost me twenty-six pounds sterling, out of my own pocket, to hire an extra train; but I did not grumble, as it enabled me to reach Vienna in time to escape a reprimand. The

exact fate of the other captives I never knew, but I believe that they were not severely punished, since, by a lucky accident, they had not had time to affix their signatures to those already attached to the manifesto which Princess Anna had hoodwinked me into carrying to her brother's house, and which was a document pledging its subscribers to a general revolt.

Years afterwards, at Lisbon, where Dillon was first attaché, the latter told me that the words he had vainly attempted to bawl in my ears as the train swept me past the platform, merely comprised this friendly warning:

"Ignatius Kraskoff is a notorious spy of the police!"

In which capacity, and in consequence of my intimacy at the Sobieski palace, that pink and paragon of good travelling servants had been instructed to attach himself to me.

END OF VOL. I.